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THE WORKS

OF

ALLAN RAMSAY

VOL. III.

THE

WORKS

OF

ALLAN RAMSAY.

WITH LIFE OF THE AUTHOR

BY GEORGE CHALMERS;

AN ESSAY ON HIS GENIUS AND WRITINGS

BY LORD WOODHOUSELEE;

AND AN APPENDIX

RELATIVE TO HIS LIFE AND POSTHUMOUS REPUTATION.

VOL. III.

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EPIGRAMMATICAL POEMS.

EPIGRAMMATICAL POEMS.

1721.

CUPID THROWN INTO THE SOUTH SEA.

Myrtilla, as like Venus' sell,
As e'er an egg was like anither,
Anes Cupid met upon the Mall,
And took her for his bonny mither.

He wing'd his way up to her breast:
She started; he cry'd, "Mam, 'tis me."
The beauty, in o'er rash a jest,
Flang the arch gytling in South Sea.

Frae thence he raise wi' gilded wings,
His bow and shafts to gowd were chang'd;
"Deel's i' the sea," quoth he, "it dings!"
Syne back to Mall and park he rang'd.

Breathing mischief, the god look'd gurly,
With transfers a' his darts were feather'd;
He made a horrid hurly burly,
Where beaus and belles were thickest gather'd.

He tentily Myrtilla sought,
And in the thrang Change-Alley got her:
He drew his bow, and quick, as thought,
With a braw new subscription shot her.

1721.

ON A GOLD TEA-POT.

After the gaining Edinburgh's prize,
The day before, with running thrice,
Me Milncraig's rock most fairly won,
When thrice again the course he run:
Now for diversion 'tis my share
To run three heats and please the fair.

1721.

ON A PUNCH-BOWL.

Charge me with Nantz and limpid spring,
Let sour and sweet be mixt;
Bend round a health, syne to the king,
To Edinburgh's captains next,
Wha form'd me in sae blyth a shape,
And gave me lasting honours,
Take up my ladle, fill, and lape,
And say, Fair fa' the donors!

SPOKEN TO THREE YOUNG LADIES.

Me, anes three beauties did surround,
And ilka beauty gave a wound,
Whilst they with smiling eye,

Said, "Allan, which think ye maist fair?
Gi'e judgment frankly; never spare."—
"Hard is the task," said I.

But added, seeing them sae free,
"Ladies, ye maun say mair to me,
And my demand right fair is;
First, like the gay celestial three,
Shaw a' your charms, and then ha'e wi' ye,
Faith, I shall be your Paris."

1721.

THE ROSE-TREE.

With awe and pleasure we behold thy sweets;
Thy lovely roses have their pointed guards;
Yet, tho' the gath'rer opposition meets,
The fragrant purchase all his pain rewards.

But hedg'd about and watch'd with wary eyes,
O plant superior, beautiful, and fair!
We view thee like yon stars which gem the skies,
But equally to gain we must despair.

Ah! wert thou growing on some secret plain,
And found by me, how ravish'd would I meet
All thy transporting charms to ease my pain,
And feast my raptur'd soul on all that's sweet.

Thus sung poor Symon.—Symon was in love,
His too aspiring passion made him smart;
The rose-tree was a mistress far above
The shepherd's hope, which broke his tender heart.

1721.

SPOKEN TO TWO YOUNG LADIES.

TO THE FIRST.

Upon your cheek sits blooming youth.

TO THE OTHER.

Heaven sparkles in your eye.

TO BOTH.

There's something sweet about each mouth;
Dear ladies, let me try.

ON RECEIVING A PRESENT OF AN ORANGE

FROM MISS G. LOCKHART, NOW THE COUNTESS OF ABOYNE.

Now, Priam's son, thou may'st be mute,
For I can blythly boast with thee;
Thou to the fairest gave the fruit,
The fairest gave the fruit to me.

1728.

TO MR. POPE.

Three times I've read your Iliad o'er:
The first time pleas'd me well;

New beauties unobserv'd before,
Next pleas'd me better still.

Again I try'd to find a flaw,
Examin'd ilka line;
The third time pleas'd me best of a',
The labour seem'd divine.

Henceforward I'll not tempt my fate,
On dazzling rays to stare,
Lest I should tine dear self-conceit,
And read and write nae mair.

WROTE ON LADY SOMERVILLE'S BOOK OF SCOTS SANGS.

Gae, canty book, and win a name;
Nae lyrics e'er shall ding thee:
Hope large esteem, and lasting fame,
If Somervilla sing thee.
If she thy sinless faults forgive,
Which her sweet voice can cover,
Thou shalt, in spite of critics, live
Still grateful to each lover.

AN EPIGRAM.

Minerva wand'ring in a myrtle grove,
Accosted thus the smiling queen of love:

Revenge yourself, you've cause to be afraid,
Your boasted pow'r yields to a British maid:
She seems a goddess, all her graces shine;
Love leads her beauty, which eclipses thine.
Each youth, I know, (says Venus,) thinks she's me;
Immediately she speaks, they think she's thee:
Good Pallas, thus you're foil'd as well as I.
Ha! ha! (cries Cupid,) that's my Mally Sleigh.

1728.

ON THE MARQUIS OF ANNANDALE'S

CONVEYING ME A PRESENT OF GUINEAS IN MY SNUFF-BOX, AFTER HE HAD TAKEN ALL THE SNUFF.

The Chief requir'd my snishing-mill,
And well it was bestow'd;
The patron, by the rarest skill,
Turn'd all the snuff to gowd.

Gowd stampt with royal Anna's face,
Piece after piece came forth!
The pictures smil'd, gi'en with such grace,
By ane of so much worth.

Sure thus the patronizing Roman
Made Horace spread the wing;
Thus Dorset, by kind deeds uncommon,
Rais'd Prior up to sing.

That there are patrons yet for me,
Here's a convincing proof;

Since Annandale gives gowd as free
As I can part with snuff.

TO MRS. M. M—— ON HER PAINTING.

To paint his Venus, auld Apelles
Wal'd a' the bonny maids of Greece:
Thou needs nae mair but paint thysell, lass,
To ding the painter and his piece.

ON MR. DRUMMOND'S BEING APPOINTED

A COMMISSIONER OF THE CUSTOMS.

The good are glad when merit meets reward,
And thus they share the pleasure of another;
While little minds, who only self regard,
Will sicken at the success of a brother.
Hence I am pleas'd to find myself right class'd,
Even by this mark, that's worthy of observing;
It gives me joy, the patent lately pass'd
In favour of dear Drummond, most deserving.

ON THE DUKE OF HAMILTON'S SHOOTING

AN ARROW THROUGH THE NECK OF AN EEL.

As from a bow a fatal flane,
Train'd by Apollo from the main,
In water pierc'd an eel;

Sae mae the patriot's power and art
Sic fate to souple rogues impart,
That drumble at the commonweal.
Tho' they as ony eels are slid,
And thro' what's vile can scud,
A bolt may reach them, tho' deep hid,
They sculk beneath their mud.

TO CALISTA.

Anes wisdom, majesty, and beauty,
Contended to allure the swain,
Wha fain wad pay to ilk his duty,
But only ane the prize could gain.

Were Jove again to redd debate,
Between his spouse and daughters twa,
And were it dear Calista's fate
To bid among them for the ba

When given to her, the shepherd might,
Then with the single apple serve a';
Since she's possest of a' that's bright,
In Juno, Venus, and Minerva.

A CHARACTER.

Of judgment just, and fancy clear,
Industrious, yet not avaricious;
No slave to groundless hope and fear;
Cheerful, yet hating to be vicious.

From envy free; tho' prais'd, not vain;
Ne'er acting without honour's warrant;
Still equal, generous, and humane,
As husband, master, friend, and parent.

So modest, as scarce to be known
By glaring, proud, conceited asses,
Whose little spirits aften frown
On such as their less worth surpasses.

Ye'll own he's a deserving man,
That in these outlines stands before ye;
And trowth the picture I have drawn
Is very like my friend ——. (1)

1726.

VERSES

ON THE LAST LEAF OF THE BANNATYNE MANUSCRIPT IN THE ADVOCATE'S LIBRARY.

In seventeen hundred twenty-four,
Did Allan Ramsay keen-
ly gather from this book that store,
Which fills his Evergreen.

Thrice fifty and sax towmonds neat,
Frae when it was collected;
Let worthy poets hope good fate,
Thro' time they'll be respected.

(1) The character, though true, has something in it so great that my too modest friend will not allow me to set his name to it.

Fashion of words and wit may change,
And rob in part their fame,
And make them to dull fops look strange,
But sense is still the same;

And will bleez bright to that clear mind,
That loves the ancient strains,
Like good Carmichael, patron kind,
To whom this book pertains.

FINIS quod ALLAN RAMSAY.

SPOKEN TO MRS. N——.

A POEM wrote without a thought,
By notes may to a song be brought,
Tho' wit be scarce, low the design,
And numbers lame in ev'ry line;
But when fair Christy this shall sing
In concert with the trembling string,
O! then the poet's often prais'd
For charms so sweet a voice hath raised.

EPISTOLARY POEMS.

EPISTOLARY POEMS.

1721.

AN EPISTLE TO ALLAN RAMSAY,

BY JOSIAH BURCHET, ESQ.

Well fare thee, Allan! who in mother-tongue
So sweetly hath of breathless Addie sung:
His endless fame thy nat'ral genius fir'd,
And thou hast written as if he inspir'd.
Richy and Sandy, who do him survive,
Long as thy rural stanzas last, shall live;
The grateful swains thou'st made, in tuneful verse,
Mourn sadly o'er their late, lost patron's hearse.
Nor would the Mantuan bard, if living, blame
Thy pious zeal, or think thou'st hurt his fame,
Since Addison's inimitable lays
Give him an equal title to the bays.
When he of armies sang in lofty strains,
It seem'd as if he in the hostile plains
Had present been; his pen hath to the life
Trac'd every action in the sanguine strife.
In council now sedate the chief appears,
Then loudly thunders in Bavarian ears;
And still pursuing the destructive theme,
He pushes them into the rapid stream:
Thus beaten out of Blenheim's neighb'ring fields,
The Gallic gen'ral to the victor yields,

Who, as Britannia's Virgil hath observ'd,
From threaten'd fate all Europe then preserv'd.
Nor dost thou, Ramsay, sightless Milton wrong,
By ought contain'd in thy melodious song;
For none but Addie could his thoughts sublime
So well unriddle, or his mystic rhyme.
And when he deign'd to let his fancy rove
Where sun-burnt shepherds to the nymphs make love,
No one e'er told in softer notes the tales
Of rural pleasures in the spangled vales.
So much, O Allan, I thy lines revere,
Such veneration to his mem'ry bear,
That I no longer could my thanks refrain
For what thou'st sung of the lamented swain.

THE ANSWER TO THE FOREGOING.

Thirsting for fame, at the Pierian spring,
The poet takes a waught, then 'seys to sing
Nature, and with the tentiest view to hit
Her bonny side with bauldest terms of wit.
Streams slide in verse, in verse the mountains rise;
When earth turns toom, he rummages the skies,
Mounts up beyond them, paints the fields of rest,
Doups down to visit ilka lawland ghaist.
O heartsome labour! wordy time and pains!
That frae the best esteem and friendship gains:
Be that my luck, and let the greedy bike,
Stock-job the warld amang them as they like.
In blyth braid Scots allow me, Sir, to shaw
My gratitude, but (1) fleetching or a flaw.

(1) "But" is frequently used for "without;" i. e. without flattering.

May rowth of pleasures light upon you lang,
Till to the blest Elysian bow'rs ye gang,
Wha've clapt my head sae brawly for my sang.
When honour'd Burchet and his maikes are pleas'd
With my corn-pipe, up to the stars I'm heez'd;
Whence far I glowr to the fag-end of time,
And view the warld delighted wi' my rhyme:
That when the pride of sprush new words are laid,
I, like the classic authors shall be read.
Stand yond, proud czar, I wadna niffer fame
With thee, for a' thy furs and paughty name!
If sic great ferlies, Sir, my muse can do,
As spin a three-plait praise where it is due,
Frae me there's nane deserves it mair than you.
Frae me!—frae ilka ane; for sure a breast
Sae gen'rous is, of a' that's good possest!
Till I can serve ye mair, I'll wish ye weel,
And aft in sparkling claret drink your heal;
Minding the mem'ry of the great and good
Sweet Addison, the wale of human blood,
Wha fell (as Horace anes said to his billy)
"Nulli flebilior quam tibi Virgili."

1719.

SEVEN FAMILIAR EPISTLES, (1)

WHICH PASSED BETWEEN LIEUT. HAMILTON (2)

AND THE AUTHOR.

EPISTLE I.

GILBERTFIELD, June 26th, 1719.

O FAM'D and celebrated Allan!
Renowned Ramsay! canty callan!

(1) [* See vol. i. p. 79.]

(2) For some account of this gentleman, see the Life of Ramsay prefixed. [* We are indebted to a very meritorious publication, 'The Scottish Journal of Topography,' &c. No. 8. for the following particulars respecting Ramsay's correspondent William Hamilton of Gilbertfield:—His ancestors, a branch of the ducal family of Hamilton, owned the lands of Ardoch, near Kilwinning, from an early period. Captain William Hamilton, father of the poet, acquired the property of Ladyland, near Kilwinning, about the middle of the seventeenth century. Shortly afterwards he "biggit a new house, of twa stories, with sklates," in lieu of the old castle of Ladyland, which he demolished. Captain Hamilton was one of those who refused the Test act in 1684, and was in consequence disarmed. He fell in action against the French, during the wars of King William. He married in 1662, Janet, daughter of John Brisbane of that Ilk, by whom he left two sons, John, his heir, and WILLIAM, the subject of this notice. The precise date of either of their births is not known. It is presumable, however, that the latter was born sometime between 1665 and 1670. He entered the army early in life, and served many years abroad. He rose, however, no higher than the rank of lieutenant, which commission he held "honourably in my Lord Hyndford's regiment." On retiring on half-pay, he resided at Gilbertfield, in the parish of Cambuslang. Whether the property was his own does not appear. His being styled "of Gilbertfield" would imply that it did; though it may have been adopted merely in contradistinction to Hamilton of Bangour, who was a cotemporary. "His time (says a writer in the Lives of Eminent Scotsmen) [London, 1822. 18mo] was now divided between the sports of the field, the cultivation of several valued friendships with men of genius and taste, and the occasional production of some effusions of his own, in which the gentleman and the poet were alike conspicuous. His intimacy with the author of 'The Gentle Shepherd,' three of his epistles to whom are to be found in the common editions of Ramsay's works, commenced in an admiration, on Ramsay's part, of some pieces which had found

There's nowther Highlandman nor Lawlan,
In poetrie,
But may as soon ding down Tamtallan,(1)
As match wi' thee.

For ten times ten, and that's a hunder,
I ha'e been made to gaze and wonder,
When frae Parnassus thou didst thunder,
Wi' wit and skill;
Wherefore I'll soberly knock under,
And quat my quill.

Of poetry the hail quintescence
Thou hast suck'd up, left nae excrescence
To petty poets, or sic messens,
Tho' round thy stool
They may pick crumbs, and lear some lessons
At Ramsay's school.

their way into circulation from Hamilton's pen." This was not the case. At all events the correspondence began with Hamilton. These familiar epistles, as they are termed, are highly creditable to the poetical talent of both parties; yet, without depreciating the merit of Ramsay, we think the superiority may be justly awarded to the Ayrshire poet. His verses are characterised by an easy flow of composition, not possessed by those of Auld Reekie's much-famed bard. In 1722, Lieut. Hamilton published an abridgment, modernised, of Henry the Minstrel's Life of Wallace. It was, however, considered an injudicious undertaking, and brought him neither profit nor fame. From Gilbertfield, the poet, towards the close of his days, removed to Latterick, in Lanarkshire, where he died "at a very advanced age," on the 24th May 1751. He married a lady of his own name—probably a relation—by whom, it appears from the parish records of Kilbirnie, he had a daughter baptized Anna on the 16th of June 1693, so that he must have entered the matrimonal state at an early period of life. Whether he left any issue is unknown. The Hamiltons of Ladyland, however, are not without descendants. The brother of the poet, having sold the property to the ninth Earl of Eglinton, about 1712, proceeded to the north of Ireland, where he purchased an estate, which was subsequently disposed of by his son and heir, William, who, returning to Scotland in 1744, bought the lands of Craighlaw, in Galloway. The lineal representative of the family, William Hamilton of Craighlaw, is, or was lately, an officer in the 10th Hussars. He was one of the protesters against the Veto act of the General Assembly in 1839.]

(1) An old castle upon the firth of Forth in East Lothian.

Tho' Ben (1) and Dryden of renown
Were yet alive in London town,
Like kings contending for a crown,
'Twad be a pingle,
Whilk o' you three wad gar words sound
And best to gingle.

Transform'd may I be to a rat,
Wer't in my pow'r, but I'd create
Thee upo' sight the laureat (2)
Of this our age,
Since thou may'st fairly claim to that
As thy just wage.

Let modern poets bear the blame,
Gin they respect not Ramsay's name,
Wha soon can gar them greet for shame,
To their great loss,
And send them a' right sneeking hame
Be Weeping-cross.

Wha bourds wi' thee had need be wary,
And lear wi' skill thy thrust to parry,
When thou consults thy dictionary
Of ancient words,
Which come from thy poetic quarry
As sharp as swords.

Now tho' I should baith reel and rottle
And be as light as Aristotle,

(1) The celebrated Ben Jonson.
(2) Scots Ramsay press'd hard, and sturdily vaunted,
He'd fight for the laurel before he would want it:
But risit Apollo, and cry'd, Peace there, old stile,
Your wit is obscure to one half of the isle.

B. Sess. of Poets.

At Ed'nburgh we sall ha'e a bottle
Of reaming claret,
Gin that my half-pay (1) siller shottle
Can safely spare it.

At crambo then we'll rack our brain,
Drown ilk dull care and aking pain,
Whilk aften does our spirits drain
Of true content;
Woy, woy! but we's be wonder fain,
When thus acquaint.

Wi' wine we'll gargarize our craig,
Then enter in a lasting league,
Free of ill aspect or intrigue;
And, gin you please it,
Like princes when met at the Hague,
We'll solemnize it. (2)

(1) He had held his commission honourably in Lord Hyndford's regiment.

And may the stars who shine aboon,
With honour notice real merit,
Be to my friend auspicious soon,
And cherish ay sae fine a spirit.

(2) [* "Who can fail to trace in these lines," says the writer of the article on Hamilton of Gilbertfield, in 'The Scottish Journal of Topography,' &c. already quoted, "the germ of the more celebrated familiar epistles of Burns? This is particularly the case in the Bard's first letter to Lapraik, where we have the social proposal of Hamilton to drink a bottle of 'reaming claret,' and have a set-to at 'crambo' with Ramsay at Edinburgh, thus reiterated:—

'But Mauchline race or Mauchline fair,
I should be proud to meet you there;
We'se gie ae nicht's discharge to care,
If we forgather,
And hae a *swap o' rymin' ware*,
Wi' ane anither.

The four-gill chap, we'se gar him clatter,
An' kirsen him wi' reekin' water;
Syne we'll sit down an' tak our whitter,
To cheer our heart;
An' faith, we'se be acquainted better
Before we part.'"]

Accept of this, and look upon it
With favour, tho' poor I have done it:
Sae I conclude and end my sonnet,
Who am most fully,
While I do wear a hat or bonnet,

Yours,

WANTON WILLY.

POSTSCRIPT.

By this my postscript I incline
To let you ken my hail design
Of sic a long imperfect line
Lies in this sentence,
To cultivate my dull engine
By your acquaintance.

Your answer therefore I expect;
And to your friend you may direct
At Gilbertfield; (1) do not neglect,
When ye have leisure,
Which I'll embrace with great respect,
And perfect pleasure.

ANSWER I.

EDINBURGH, July 10th, 1719.

SONSE fa' me, witty, Wanton Willy,
Gin blyth I was na as a filly;

(1) Nigh Glasgow.

Not a fou pint, nor short-hought gilly,
Or wine that's better,
Cou'd please sae meikle, my dear Billy,
As thy kind letter!

Before a lord and eik a knight,
In gossy Don's be candle-light,
There first I saw't, and ca'd it right,
And the maist feck
Wha's seen't sinsyne, they ca'd as tight
As that on Heck.

Ha, heh! thought I, I canna say
But I may cock my nose the day,
When Hamilton the bauld and gay
Lends me a heezy,
In verse that slides sae smooth away,
Well tell'd and easy.

Sae roos'd by ane of well-kend mettle,
Nae sma' did my ambition pettle,
My canker'd critics it will nettle,
And e'en sae be 't:
This month I'm sure I winna settle,
Sae proud I'm wi't.

When I begoud first to cun verse,
And cou'd your Ardry whins (1) rehearse,

(1) The last words of 'Bonny Heck,' of which he was the author. It is printed in a Choice Collection of Comic and Serious Scots poems, by Watson, Edinburgh, 1706. [* The following is a specimen of Hamilton's Last Dying Words of Bonny Heck:

"Alas! alas!" quo' bonny Heck,—
"On former days when I reflect!
I was a dog much in respect
For doughty deed;
But now I must hing by the neck,
Without remeed.
* * * *

Where Bonny Heck ran fast and fierce,
It warm'd my breast;
Then emulation did me pierce,
Whilk since ne'er ceast.

May I be licket wi' a bittle,
Gin of your numbers I think little;
Ye're never rugget, shan, nor kittle,
But blyth and gabby,
And hit the spirit to a title
Of standart Habby. (1)

What great feats I have done mysel'!
Within clink o' Kilrenny bell,
When I was souple, young, and fell
But fear or dread,—
John Ness and Paterson can tell,
Whose hearts may bleed.
* * * *
At the King's-muir and Kelly-law,
Where good stout hares gang fast awa',
So cleverly I did it claw,
Wi' pith and speed,
I bure the bell before them a',
As clean's a bead.
* * * *
I wily, witty was, and gash,
Wi' my auld farrant pauky pash,
Nae man might ance buy me for cash
In some respect;
Are they nae then confounded rash,
That hangs poor Heck?
* * * *
Now honesty was aye my drift;
An innocent and harmless shift,
A kail-pat lid gently to lift,
Or am'ry sneck;
Shame fa' the chafts dare ca' that theft!"—
Quo' bonny Heck.
* * * *
"But now, good sirs, this day is lost;
The best dog in the East-nook coast!
For never ane durst brag nor boast
Me for their neck;
But now I must yield up the ghost!—"
Quo' bonny Heck."]

(1) The elegy on Habby Simpson, piper of Kilbarchan; a finished piece

Ye'll quat your quill!—that were ill, Willy,
Ye's sing some mair yet nill ye will ye,
O'er meikle haining wad but spill ye,
And gar ye sour;
Then up and war them a' yet, Willy,
'Tis in your pow'r.

of its kind, which was printed in the same Choice Collection. [* A few verses from this elegy may also be quoted here as a specimen of Hamilton's vigour of comic humour:

"—Wha will cause our shearers shear?
Wha will bend up the brags of wear,
Bring in the balls or good play meir,
In time of need?
Hab Simson cou'd, what needs you speer?
But now he's dead!

So kindly to his neighbours neist,
At Beltan and Saint Barchan's feast,
He blew and then held up his breest,
As he were weid:
But now we need not him arreest,
For Habbie's dead!

At fair he play'd before the spearmen,
All gaily graithed in their geir-men;
Steel bonnets, jacks, and swords so clear then,
Like ony bead:
Now wha shall play before such weir-men,
Sin Habbie's dead?

At Clark-plays when he wont to come,
His pipe play'd timely to the drum,
Like bikes of bees he gart it bum,
And tun'd his reed:
Now all our pipers may sing dumb,
Sin Habbie's dead!
* * * *
And then, besides, his valiant acts,
At bridals he won mony placks;
He bobbed aye behind fo'ks backs,
And shook his head:
Now we want mony merry cracks,
Sin Habbie's dead.

He was convoyer of the bride,
With kittock hinging by his side;
About the kirk he thought a pride
The ring to lead:
But now we may gae but a guide,
For Habbie's dead!"]

To knit up dollars in a clout,
And then to card them round about,
Syne to tell up, they downa lout
To lift the gear;
The malison lights on that rout,
Is plain and clear.

The chiels of London, Cam, and Ox,
Ha'e rais'd up great poetic stocks
Of Rapes, of Buckets, Sarks, and Locks,
While we neglect
To shaw their betters; this provokes
Me to reflect

On the learn'd days of Gawn Dunkell; (1)
Our country then a tale cou'd tell,
Europe had nane mair snack and snell
At verse or prose:
Our kings (2) were poets too themsell,
Bauld and jocose.

To Ed'nburgh, Sir, whene'er ye come,
I'll wait upon ye, there's my thumb,
Were't frae the gill-bells to the drum, (3)
And tak' a bout,
And faith I hope we'll not sit dumb,
Nor yet cast out.

(1) Gawn Douglas, the brother of the earl of Angus, the bishop of Dunkell, who, besides several original poems, hath left a most exact translation of Virgil's Æneis into the Scottish language of his age: he died in 1522.

(2) James the First and Fifth.

(3) From half an hour before twelve at noon, when the music-bells begin to play, (frequently called the gill-bells, from people's taking a whetting dram at that time,) to the drum at ten o'clock at night, when the drum goes round to warn sober folks to call for a bill.

EPISTLE II.

GILBERTFIELD, July 24th, 1719.

DEAR RAMSAY,

WHEN I receiv'd thy kind epistle,
It made me dance, and sing, and whistle;
O sic a fike and sic a fistle
I had about it!
That e'er was knight of the Scots thistle (1)
Sae fain, I doubted.

The bonny lines therein thou sent me,
How to the nines they did content me!
Tho', Sir, sae high to compliment me
Ye might deferr'd,
For had ye but haff well a kent me,
Some less wad ser'd.

With joyfu' heart beyond expression,
They're safely now in my possesion:
O gin I were a winter session
Near by thy lodging,
I'd close attend thy new profession,
Without e'er budging.

In even down earnest, there's but few
To vie with Ramsay dare avow,

(1) The ancient and most noble order of knighthood, instituted by king Achaius, and renewed by James VII. The ordinary ensign, worn by the knights of the order, is a green ribband, to which is appended a thistle of gold crowned with an imperial crown, within a circle of gold, with this motto, "Nemo me impune lacesset."

In verse, for to gi'e thee thy due,
And without fleetching,
Thou's better at that trade I trow,
Than some's at preaching. (1)

For my part, till I'm better lear't,
To troke with thee I'd best forbear't,
For an' the fouk of Ed'nburgh hear't
They'll ca' me daft;
I'm unco iri, and dirt feart
I mak' wrang waft.

Thy verses nice as ever nicket,
Made me as canty as a cricket;
I ergh to reply, lest I stick it;
Syne like a coof
I look, or ane whose pouch is pickit
As bare's my loof.

Heh winsom! how thy saft sweet style,
And bonny auld words gar me smile;
Thou's travell'd sure mony a mile
Wi' charge and cost,
To learn them thus keep rank and file,
And ken their post.

For I man tell thee, honest Allie,
(I use the freedom so to call thee,)
I think them a' sae braw and walie,
And in sic order,
I wad nae care to be thy vallie,
Or thy recorder.

(1) This compliment is entirely free of the fulsome hyperbole.

Has thou with Rosicrucians (1) wandert,
Or thro' some doncie desart dandert?
That with thy magic, town and landart,
For ought I see,
Man a' come truckle to thy standart
Of poetrie.

Do not mistake me, dearest heart,
As if I charg'd thee with black art;
'Tis thy good genius, still alert,
That does inspire
Thee with ilk thing that's quick and smart
To thy desire.

E'en mony a bonny nacky tale
Bra to sit o'er a pint of ale:
For fifty guineas I'll find bail
Against a bodle,
That I wad quat ilk day a meal
For sic a nodle.

And on condition I were as gabby
As either thee or honest Habby,
That I lin'd a' thy claes wi' tabby,
Or velvet plush,
And then thou'd be sae far frae shabby,
Thou'd look right sprush.

What though young empty airy sparks
May have their critical remarks
On thir my blyth diverting warks;
'Tis sma presumption,
To say they're but unlearned clarks,
And want the gumption.

(1) A people deeply learned in the occult sciences, who conversed with aerial beings: gentlemanlike kind of necromancers, or so.

Let coxcomb critics get a tether
To tye up a' their lang loose leather;
If they and I chance to forgether,
The tane may rue it;
For an they winna had their blether,
They's get a flewet.

To learn them for to peep and pry
In secret drolls 'twixt thee and I,
Pray dip thy pen in wrath, and cry,
And ca' them skellums;
I'm sure thou needs set little by
To bide their bellums.

Wi' writing I'm sae bleirt and doited,
That when I raise, in troth I stoited;
I thought I should turn capernoited,
For wi' a gird,
Upon my bum I fairly cloited
On the cald eard;

Which did oblige a little dumple
Upon my doup close by my rumple:
But had you seen how I did trumple,
Ye'd split your side,
Wi' mony a lang and weary wimple,
Like trough of Clyde.

ANSWER II.

EDINBURGH, August 4th, 1719.

DEAR Hamilton, ye'll turn me dyver,
My muse sae bonny ye descrive her;

Ye blaw her sae, I'm fear'd ye rive her,
For wi' a whid,
Gin ony higher up ye drive her,
She'll rin red-wood.(1)

Said I.—"Whisht!"—Quoth the vougy jade,—
"William's a wise judicious lad,
Has haviins mair than e'er ye had,
Ill-bred bog-staker;(2)
But me ye ne'er sae crouse had craw'd,
Ye poor scull-thacker!(3)

"It sets ye well indeed to gadge!(4)
Ere I t' Apollo did ye cadge,
And got ye on his Honour's badge,
Ungratefu' beast!
A Glasgow capon and a fadge(5)
Ye thought a feast.

"Swith to Castalius' fountain brink,
Dad down a grouf,(6) and tak a drink,
Syne whisk out paper, pen, and ink,
And do my bidding:
Be thankfou, else I'll gar ye stink
Yet on a midding!"

(1) Run distracted.
(2) The muse, not unreasonably angry, puts me here in mind of the favours she has done, by bringing me from stalking over bogs or wild marshes, to lift my head a little brisker among the polite world, which could never have been acquired by the low movements of a mechanic.
(3) Thatcher of skulls.
(4) Ironically she says, It becomes me mighty well to talk haughtily, and affront my benefactress, by alleging so meanly, that it were possible to praise her out of her solidity.
(5) A herring, and a coarse kind of leavened bread used by the common people.
(6) Fall flat on your belly.

"My mistress dear, your servant humble,"—
Said I,—"I should be laith to drumble
Your passions, or e'er gar ye grumble;
'Tis ne'er be me
Shall scandalize, or say ye bummil
Ye'r poetrie."

Frae what I've tell'd, my friend may learn
How sadly I ha'e been forfairn,
I'd better been ayont side Cairn-
amount,(1) I trow;
I've kiss'd the tawz,(2) like a good bairn.
Now, Sir, to you:

Heal be your heart, gay couthy carle,
Lang may ye help to toom a barrel;
Be thy crown ay unclowr'd in quarrel,
When thou inclines
To knoit thrawn-gabbit sumphs that snarl
At our frank lines.

Ilk good chiel says, ye're well worth gowd,
And blythness on ye's well-bestow'd,
'Mang witty Scots ye'r name's be row'd,
Ne'er fame to tine;
The crooked clinkers shall be cow'd,(3)
But ye shall shine.

Set out the burnt side of your shin,(4)
For pride in poets is nae sin;

(1) A noted hill in Kincardineshire.
(2) Kissed the rod; owned my fault like a good child.
(3) The scribbling rhymers, with their lame versification, shall be cow'd, i. e. shorn off.
(4) As if one would say, "Walk stately with your toes out." An expression used when we would bid a person (merrily) look brisk.

Glory's the prize for which they rin,
And fame's their jo;
And wha blaws best the horn shall win:
And wharefore no?

Quisquis vocabit nos vain-glorious,
Shaws scanter skill than *malos mores,*
Multi et magni men before us,
Did stamp and swagger;
Probatum est exemplum, Horace
Was a bauld bragger.

Then let the doofarts, fash'd wi' spleen,
Cast up the wrang side of their een,
Pegh, fry, and girn, wi' spite and teen,
And fa' a flyting;
Laugh, for the lively lads will screen
Us frae back-biting.

If that the gypsies dinna spung us,
And foreign whiskers ha'e na dung us;
Gin I can snifter through mundungus,
Wi' boots and belt on,
I hope to see you at St. Mungo's,(1)
Atween and beltan.

EPISTLE III.

GILBERTFIELD, August 24th, 1719.

ACCEPT my third and last essay
Of rural rhyme I humbly pray,

(1) The high church of Glasgow.

Bright Ramsay, and although it may
Seem doilt and donsie,
Yet thrice of all things, I heard say,
Was ay right sonsie.

Wharefore I scarce could sleep or slumber,
Till I made up that happy number:
The pleasure counterpoised the cumber
In every part,
And snoovt away (1) like three-hand ombre,
Sixpence a cart.

Of thy last poem, bearing date
August the fourth, I grant receipt;
It was sae braw, gart me look blate,
'Maist tyne my senses,
And look just like poor country Kate,
In Lucky Spence's. (2)

I shaw'd it to our parish priest,
Wha was as blyth as gi'm a feast;
He says, thou may had up thy creest,
And craw fu' crouse,
The poets a' to thee's but jest,
Not worth a souse.

Thy blyth and cheerful merry muse,
Of compliments is sae profuse,
For my good havins dis me roose
Sae very finely,
It were ill breeding to refuse
To thank her kindly.

(1) Whirl'd smoothly round. "Snooving" always expresses the action of a top or spindle, &c.
(2) Vide Elegy on Lucky Spence, vol. ii. p. 304.

What though sometimes in angry mood,
When she puts on her barlichood,
Her dialect seem rough and rude,
Let's ne'er be fleet,
But tak our bit, when it is good,
And buffet wi't.

For gin we ettle anes to taunt her,
And dinna cawmly thole her banter,
She'll tak the flings, (1) verse may grow scanter;
Syne wi' great shame
We'll rue the day that we do want her;
Then wha's to blame?

But let us still her kindness culzie,
And wi' her never breed a tulzie,
For we'll bring aff but little spulzie
In sic a barter;
And she'll be fair to gar us fulzie,
And cry for quarter.

Sae little worth's my rhyming ware,
My pack I scarce dare apen mair,
'Till I tak better wi' the lair,
My pen's sae blunted;
And a' for fear I file the fair, (2)
And be affronted.

The dull draff-drink (3) makes me sae dowff,
A' I can do's but bark and youff;

(1) Turn sullen, restive, and kick.
(2) This phrase is used when one attempts to do what is handsome and is affronted by not doing it right:—not a reasonable fear in him.
(3) Heavy malt-liquor.

Yet set me in a claret howff,
Wi' fouk that's chancy,
My muse may lend me then a gowff
To clear my fancy.

Then Bacchus-like I'd bawl and bluster,
And a' the muses 'bout me muster;
Sae merrily I'd squeeze the cluster,
And drink the grape,
'Twad gi'e my verse a brighter lustre,
And better shape.

The pow'rs aboon be still auspicious
To thy achievements maist delicious;
Thy poems sweet, and nae way vicious,
But blyth and canny,
To see I'm anxious and ambitious,
Thy Miscellany.

A' blessings,(1) Ramsay, on thee row;
Lang may thou live, and thrive, and dow,
Until thou claw an auld man's pow;
And through thy creed,
Be keeped frae the wirricow,
After thou's dead.

ANSWER III.

EDINBURGH, Sep. 2, 1719.

MY TRUSTY TROJAN,

THY last oration orthodox,
Thy innocent auld farren jokes,

(1) All this verse is a succinct cluster of kind wishes, elegantly expressed, with a friendly spirit; to which I take the liberty to add, Amen.

And sonsy saw of three provokes
Me anes again,
Tod lowrie like,(1) to loose my pocks,
And pump my brain.

By a' your letters I ha'e read,
I eithly scan the man well-bred,
And soger that, where honour led,
Has ventur'd bauld;
Wha now to youngsters leaves the yed,
To 'tend his fauld.(2)

That bang'ster billy, Cæsar July,
Wha at Pharsalia wan the tooly,
Had better sped had he mair hooly
Scamper'd through life,
And 'midst his glories sheath'd his gooly,
And kiss'd his wife.

Had he, like you, as well he cou'd,(3)
Upon burn banks the muses woo'd,
Retir'd betimes frae 'mang the crowd,
Wha'd been aboon him,
The senate's durks, and faction loud,
Had ne'er undone him.

Yet sometimes leave the riggs and bog,
Your howms, and braes, and shady scrog,
And helm-a-lee the claret cog,
To clear your wit:
Be blyth, and let the warld e'en shog
As it thinks fit.

(1) Like Reynard the fox, to betake myself to some more of my wiles.
(2) Leaves the martial contention, and retires to a country life.
(3) It is well known he could write as well as fight.

Ne'er fash about your neist year's state,
Nor with superior pow'rs debate,
Nor cantrapes cast to ken your fate;
There's ills anew
To cram our days, which soon grow late;
Let's live just now.

When northern blasts the ocean snurl,
And gars the heights and hows look gurl,
Then left about the bumper whirl,
And toom the horn;(1)
Grip fast the hours which hasty hurl,
The morn's the morn.

Thus to Leuconoe sang sweet Flaccus,(2)
Wha nane e'er thought a gillygacus;
And why should we let whimsies bawk us,
When joy's in season,
And thole sae aft the spleen to whauk us
Out of our reason?

Though I were laird of tenscore acres,
Nodding to jouks of hallenshakers,(3)
Yet crush'd wi' humdrums, which the weaker's
Contentment ruins,
I'd rather roost wi' causey-rakers,
And sup cauld sowens.

I think, my friend, an fowk can get
A doll of roast beef piping het,

(1) It is frequent in the country to drink beer out of horn cups made in shape of a water-glass.

(2) Vide book i. ode 11. of Horace.

(3) A hallen is a fence (built of stone, turf, or a moveable flake of heather) at the sides of the door, in country places, to defend them from the wind. The trembling attendant about a forgetful great man's gate or levee, is also expressed in the term "hallenshaker."

And wi' red wine their wyson wet,
And cleathing clean,
And be nae sick, or drown'd in debt,
They're no to mean.

I read this verse to my ain kimmer,
Wha kens I like a leg of gimmer,
Or sic and sic good belly timmer:
Quoth she, and leugh,
"Sicker of thae, winter and simmer,
Ye're well enough."

My hearty goss, there is nae help,
But hand to nive we twa man skelp
Up Rhine and Thames, and o'er the Alp-
pines and Pyrenians.
The cheerfou carles do sae yelp
To ha'e 's their minions.

Thy raffan rural rhyme sae rare,
Sic wordy, wanton, hand-wail'd ware,
Sae gash and gay, gars fowk gae gare(1)
To hae them by them;
Though gaffin they wi' sides sae sair,
Cry "Wae gae by him!"(2)

Fair fa' that soger did invent
To ease the poet's toil wi' print:
Now, William, we man to the bent,
And pouss our fortune,
And crack wi' lads wha're well content
Wi' this our sporting.

(1) Make people very earnest.

(2) It is usual for many, after a full laugh, to complain of sore sides, and to bestow a kindly curse on the author of the jest: but the folks of more tender consciences have turned expletives to friendly wishes, such this, or "sonse fa' ye," and the like.

Gin ony sour-mou'd girning bucky
Ca' me conceity keckling chucky,
That we, like nags whase necks are yucky,
Have us'd our teeth;
I'll answer fine, Gae kiss ye'r Lucky,(1)
She dwells in Leith.

I ne'er wi' lang tales fash my head,
But when I speak, I speak indeed:
Wha ca's me droll, but ony feed,
I'll own I'm sae;
And while my champers can chew bread,
Yours,—Allan Ramsay.

AN EPISTLE TO LIEUTENANT HAMILTON,

ON RECEIVING THE COMPLIMENT OF A BARREL OF LOCHFINE HERRINGS FROM HIM.

Your herrings, Sir, came hale and feer,(2)
In healsome brine a' soumin,
Fu' fat they are, and gusty gear,
As e'er I laid my thumb on;
Bra sappy fish
As ane could wish
To clap on fadge or scone;
They relish fine
Good claret wine,
That gars our cares stand yon.

(1) Is a cant phrase, from what rise I know not; but it is made use of when one thinks it is not worth while to give a direct answer, or think themselves foolishly accused.
(2) Whole, without the least fault or want.

Right mony gabs wi' them shall gang
About Auld Reekie's ingle,
When kedgy carles think nae lang,
When stoups and trunchers gingle:
Then my friend leal,
We toss ye'r heal,
And with bald brag advance,
What's hoorded in
Lochs Broom and Fin (1)
Might ding the stocks of France.

A jelly sum to carry on
A fishery's design'd, (2)
Twa million good of sterling pounds,
By men of money's sign'd.
Had ye but seen
How unco keen
And thrang they were about it,
That we are bald,
Right rich, and ald-
farran, ye ne'er wad doubted.

Now, now, I hope, we'll ding the Dutch,
As fine as a round-robin,
Gin greediness to grow soon rich
Invites not to stock-jobbing:
That poor boss shade
Of sinking trade,
And weather-glass politic,
Which heaves and sets
As public gets
A heezy, or a wee kick.

(1) Two lochs on the western seas, where plenty of herrings are taken.

(2) The royal fishery; success to which is the wish and hope of every good man.

Fy, fy!—but yet I hope 'tis daft
To fear that trick come hither;
Na, we're aboon that dirty craft
Of biting ane anither
The subject rich
Will gi' a hitch
T' increase the public gear,
When on our seas,
Like bisy bees,
Ten thousand fishers steer.

Could we catch th' united shoals
That crowd the western ocean,
The Indies would prove hungry holes,
Compar'd to this our Goshen:
Then let's to wark
With net and bark,
Them fish and faithfu' cure up;
Gin sae we join,
We'll cleek in coin
Frae a' the ports of Europe.

Thanks t' ye, Captain, for this swatch
Of our store, and your favour;
Gin I be spar'd your love to match
Shall still be my endeavour.
Next unto you,
My service due
Please gi'e to Matthew Cumin, (1)
Wha with fair heart
Has play'd his part,
And sent them true and trim in.

(1) Merchant in Glasgow, and one of the late magistrates of that city.

1721.

TO THE MUSIC CLUB.

Ere on old Shinar's plain the fortress rose,
Rear'd by those giants who durst heav'n oppose,
An universal language mankind us'd,
Till daring crimes brought accents more confus'd;
Discord and jar for punishment were hurl'd
On hearts and tongues of the rebellious world.
The primar speech with notes harmonious clear,
(Transporting thought!) gave pleasure to the ear:
Then music in its full perfection shin'd,
When man to man melodious spoke his mind.
As when a richly-fraughted fleet is lost
In rolling deeps, far from the ebbing coast,
Down many fathoms of the liquid mass,
The artist dives in ark of oak or brass;
Snatches some ingots of Peruvian ore,
And with his prize rejoicing makes the shore:
Oft this attempt is made, and much they find;
They swell in wealth, tho' much is left behind.
Amphion's sons, with minds elate and bright,
Thus plunge th' unbounded ocean of delight,
And daily gain new stores of pleasing sounds,
To glad the earth, fixing to spleen its bounds;
While vocal tubes and comfort strings, engage
To speak the dialect of the golden age.
Then you, whose symphony of souls proclaim
Your kin to heav'n, add to your country's fame,
And show that music may have as good fate
In Albion's glens, as Umbria's green retreat;
And with Correlli's soft Italian song
Mix "Cowdenknows," and "Winter nights are long:"

Nor should the martial "Pibrough" be despis'd;
Own'd and refin'd by you, these shall the more be priz'd.
Each ravish'd ear extols your heav'nly art,
Which soothes our care, and elevates the heart;
Whilst hoarser sounds the martial ardours move,
And liquid notes invite to shades and love.
Hail! safe restorer of distemper'd minds,
That with delight the raging passions binds;
Ecstatic concord, only banish'd hell,
Most perfect where the perfect beings dwell.
Long may our youth attend thy charming rites,
Long may they relish thy transported sweets.

AN EPISTLE TO MR. JAMES ARBUCKLE;(1)

DESCRIBING THE AUTHOR.

EDINBURGH, January 1719.

As errant knight, with sword and pistol,
Bestrides his steed with mighty fistle;
Then stands some time in jumbled swither,
To ride in this road, or that ither;
At last spurs on, and disna care for
A how, a what way, or a wherefore.
Or like extemporary quaker,
Wasting his lungs, t' enlighten weaker
Lanthorns of clay, where light is wanting,
With formless phrase, and formal canting;

(1) [* See vol. i. p. 78.]

While Jacob Bœhmen's (1) salt does season,
And saves his thought frae corrupt reason,
Gowling aloud with motions queerest,
Yerking those words out which lye nearest.
Thus I (no longer to illustrate
With similes, lest I should frustrate
Design laconic of a letter,
With heap of language, and no matter,)
Bang'd up my blyth auld-fashion'd whistle,
To sowf ye o'er a short epistle,
Without rule, compasses, or charcoal,
Or serious study in a dark hole.
Three times I ga'e the muse a rug,
Then bit my nails, and claw'd my lug;
Still heavy—at the last my nose
I prim'd with an inspiring dose, (2)
Then did ideas dance (dear safe us!)
As they'd been daft.—Here ends the preface.
Good Mr. James Arbuckle, Sir,
(That's merchants' style as clean as fir,)
Ye're welcome back to Caledonie, (3)
Lang life and thriving light upon ye,
Harvest, winter, spring, and summer,
And ay keep up your heartsome humour,
That ye may thro' your lucky task go,
Of brushing up our sister Glasgow;
Where lads are dext'rous at improving,
And docile lasses fair and loving:
But never tent these fellows' girning,
Wha wear their faces ay in mourning,

(1) The Teutonic philosopher, who wrote volumes of unintelligible enthusiastic bombast.
(2) Vide Mr. Arbuckle's Poem on Snuff.
(3) Having been in his native Ireland, visiting his friends.

And frae pure dulness are malicious,
Terming ilk turn that's witty, vicious.
Now, Jamie, in neist place, *secundo*,
To give you what's your due *in mundo;*
That is to say in hame-o'er phrases,
To tell ye, men of mettle praises
Ilk verse of yours, when they can light on't,
And trouth I think they're in the right on't;
For there's ay something sae auld-farrant,
Sae slid, sae unconstrain'd, and darin,
In ilka sample we have seen yet,
That little better here has been yet:
Sae much for that.—My friend Arbuckle,
I ne'er afore roos'd ane so muckle:
Fause flatt'ry nane but fools will tickle,
That gars me hate it like auld Nicol:
But when ane's of his merit conscious,
He's in the wrang, when prais'd, that glunshes.
Thirdly, not tether'd to connection,
But rattling by inspir'd direction,
Whenever fame, with voice like thunder,
Sets up a chield a warld's wonder
Either for slashing fowk to dead,
Or having wind-mills in his head,
Or poet, or an airy beau,
Or ony twa-legg'd rary-show,
They wha have never seen't are bissy
To speer what like a carlie is he.
Imprimis then, for tallness, I
Am five foot and four inches high;
A black-a-vic'd snod dapper fallow,
Nor lean, nor over-laid wi' tallow;
With phiz of a Morocco cut,
Resembling a late man of wit,

Auld gabbet Spec, (1) wha was sae cunning
To be a dummie ten years running.
Then for the fabric of my mind,
'Tis mair to mirth than grief inclin'd:
I rather choose to laugh at folly,
Than show dislike by melancholy;
Well judging a sour heavy face
Is not the truest mark of grace.
I hate a drunkard or a glutton,
Yet I'm nae fae to wine and mutton:
Great tables ne'er engag'd my wishes,
When crowded with o'er mony dishes;
A healthfu' stomach sharply set
Prefers a back-sey piping het.
I never cou'd imagine't vicious
Of a fair fame to be ambitious:
Proud to be thought a comic poet,
And let a judge of numbers know it,
I court occasion thus to show it.
Second of thirdly, pray take heed,
Ye's get a short swatch of my creed.
To follow method negatively,
Ye ken, takes place of positively:
Well then, I'm nowther whig nor tory, (2)
Nor credit give to Purgatory;
Transub., Loretta-house, and mae tricks,
As prayers to saints Katties and Patricks;

(1) The Spectator; who gives us a fictitious description of his short face and taciturnity; that he had been esteemed a dumb man for ten years.

(2) Ramsay was a zealous tory from principle. But he was much caressed by Baron Clerk and other gentlemen of opposite principles, which made him outwardly affect neutrality. His "Vision," and "Tale of three Bonnets," are sufficient proofs of his zeal as an old Jacobite: but, wishing to disguise himself, he published this, and the "Eagle and Redbreast," as ancient poems, and with the fictitious signature of "A. R. Scot;" whence they are generally attributed to an old poet, Alexander Scot, of whose composition there are several pieces in the collection published by Ramsay, called "The Evergreen."

Nor Asgilite, (1) nor Bess Clarksonian, (2)
Nor Mountaineer, (3) nor Mugletonian; (4)
Nor can believe, ant's nae great ferly,
In Cotmoor fowk and Andrew Harlay. (5)
Neist, Anti-Toland, Blunt, and Whiston,
Know positively I'm a Christian,
Believing truths and thinking free,
Wishing thrawn parties wad agree.
Say, wad ye ken my gate of fending,
My income, management, and spending?
Born to nae lairdship, (mair's the pity!)
Yet denison of this fair city;
I make what honest shift I can,
And in my ain house am good-man,
Which stands on Edinburgh's street the sun-side:
I theck the out, and line the inside
Of mony a douse and witty pash,
And baith ways gather in the cash;
Thus heartily I graze and beau it,
And keep my wife ay great wi' poet:
Contented I have sic a skair,
As does my business to a hair;
And fain wad prove to ilka Scot,
That poortith's no the poet's lot.

(1) Mr. Asgil, a late member of parliament, advanced (whether in jest or earnest I know not) some very whimsical opinions; particularly, that people need not die if they pleased, but be translated alive to heaven like Enoch and Elijah.

(2) Bessy Clarkson, a Lanarkshire woman. Vide the history of her life and principles.

(3) Our wild folks, who always prefer a hill side to a church under any civil authority.

(4) A kind of quakers, so called from one Mugleton. See Leslie's Snake in the Grass.

(5) A family or two who had a particular religion of their own, valued themselves on using vain repetitions in prayers of six or seven hours long: were pleased with ministers of no kind. Andrew Harlaw, a dull fellow of no education, was head of the party.

Fourthly and lastly baith togither,
Pray let us ken when ye come hither;
There's mony a canty carle and me
Wad be much comforted to see ye:
But if your outward be refractory,
Send us your inward manufactory,
That when we're kedgy o'er our claret,
We correspond may with your spirit.
Accept of my kind wishes, with
The same to Dons Butler, and Smith;
Health, wit, and joy, sauls large and free,
Be a' your fates:—sae God be wi' ye.

1721.

TO THE EARL OF DALHOUSIE. (1)

Dalhousie of an auld descent,
My chief, my stoup, and ornament,
For entertainment a wee while,
Accept this sonnet with a smile.
Setting great Horace in my view,
He to Mæcenas, I to you;
But that my muse may sing with ease,
I'll keep or drap him as I please.
How differently are fowk inclin'd,
There's hardly twa of the same mind!
Some like to study, some to play,
Some on the Links to win the day,

(1) [* See vol. i. p. 96.]

And gar the courser rin like wood,
A' drappin down with sweat and blood:
The winner syne assumes a look
Might gain a monarch or a duke.
Neist view the man with pawky face
Has mounted to a fashious place,
Inclined by an o'er-ruling fate,
He's pleas'd with his uneasy state;
Glowr'd at a while, he gangs fou braw,
Till frae his kittle post he fa'.

The Lothian farmer he likes best
To be of good faugh riggs possest,
And fen upon a frugal stock,
Where his forbeairs had us'd the yoke;
Nor is he found to leave his wark,
And venture in a rotten bark,
Syne unto far aff countries steer,
On tumbling waves to gather gear.

The merchant wreck'd upon the main,
Swears he'll ne'er venture on't again;
That he had rather live on cakes,
And shyrest swats, with landart maiks,
As rin the risk by storms to have,
When he is dead, a living grave.
But seas turn smooth, and he grows fain,
And fairly takes his word again,
Tho' he shou'd to the bottom sink,
Of poverty he downa think.

Some like to laugh their time away,
To dance while pipes or fiddles play;
And have nae sense of ony want,
As lang as they can drink and rant.

The rattling drum and trumpet's tout
Delight young swankies that are stout;

What his kind frighted mother ugs,
Is music to the soger's lugs.
The hunter with his hounds and hawks
Bangs up before his wife awakes;
Nor speers gin she has ought to say,
But scours o'er highs and hows a' day,
Thro' moss and moor, nor does he care
Whether the day be foul or fair,
If he his trusty hounds can cheer
To hunt the tod or drive the deer.
May I be happy in my lays,
And won a lasting wreath of bays,
Is a' my wish; well pleas'd to sing
Beneath a tree, or by a spring,
While lads and lasses on the mead
Attend my Caledonian reed,
And with the sweetest notes rehearse
My thoughts, and reese me for my verse.
If you, my lord, class me amang
Those who have sung baith saft and strang,
Of smiling love, or doughty deed,
To starns sublime I'll lift my head.

1721.

TO MR. AIKMAN.

'Tis granted, Sir, pains may be spar'd
Your merit to set forth,
When there's sae few wha claim regard,
That disna ken your worth.

Yet poets give immortal fame
To mortals that excel,
Which if neglected they're to blame;
But you've done that yoursell.

While frae originals of yours
Fair copies shall be tane,
And fix'd on brass to busk our bow'rs,
Your mem'ry shall remain.

To your ain deeds the maist deny'd,
Or of a taste o'er fine,
May be ye're but o'er right, afraid
To sink in verse like mine.

The last can ne'er the reason prove,
Else wherefore with good will
Do ye my nat'ral lays approve,
And help me up the hill?

By your assistance unconstrain'd,
To courts I can repair,
And by your art my way I've gain'd
To closets of the fair.

Had I a muse like lofty Pope,
For tow'ring numbers fit,
Then I th' ingenious mind might hope
In truest light to hit.

But comic tale, and sonnet slee,
Are casten for my share,
And if in these I bear the gree,
I'll think it very fair.

1721.

TO SIR WILLIAM BENNET.

While now in discord giddy changes reel,
And some are rack'd about on fortune's wheel,
You, with undaunted stalk and brow serene,
May trace your groves, and press the dewy green;
No guilty twangs your manly joys to wound,
Or horrid dreams to make your sleep unsound.
To such as you who can mean care despise,
Nature's all beautiful 'twixt earth and skies.
Not hurried with the thirst of unjust gain,
You can delight yourself on hill or plain,
Observing when those tender sprouts appear,
Which crowd with fragrant sweets the youthful year.
Your lovely scenes of Marlefield abound
With as much choice as is in Britain found:
Here fairest plants from nature's bosom start
From soil prolific, serv'd with curious art;
Here oft the heedful gazer is beguil'd,
And wanders thro' an artificial wild,
While native flow'ry green and crystal strands,
Appear the labours of ingenious hands.
Most happy he who can these sweets enjoy
With taste refin'd, which does not easy cloy.
Not so plebeian souls, whom sporting fate
Thrusts into life upon a large estate,
While spleen their weak imagination sours,
They're at a loss how to employ their hours:
The sweetest plants which fairest gardens show
Are lost to them, for them unheeded grow:
Such purblind eyes ne'er view the son'rous page
Where shine the raptures of poetic rage;

Nor thro' the microscope can take delight
T' observe the tusks and bristles of a mite;
Nor by the lengthen'd tube learn to descry
Those shining worlds which roll around the sky.
Bid such read hist'ry to improve their skill,
Polite excuse! their memories are ill:
Moll's maps may in their dining-rooms make show,
But their contents they're not oblig'd to know;
And gen'rous friendship's out of sight too fine,
They think it only means a glass of wine.

But he whose cheerful mind hath higher flown,
And adds learn'd thoughts of others to his own:
Has seen the world, and read the volume man,
And can the springs and ends of action scan;
Has fronted death in service of his king,
And drunken deep of the Castalian spring;
This man can live, and happiest life's his due;
Can be a friend—a virtue known to few;
Yet all such virtues strongly shine in you.

1721.

TO A FRIEND AT FLORENCE. (1)

Your steady impulse foreign climes to view,
To study nature, and what art can shew,
I now approve, while my warm fancy walks
O'er Italy, and with your genius talks;

(1) Mr. Smibert, a painter. Mr. Walpole, in his "Anecdotes of Painting," characterises him as an ingenious artist, and a modest worthy man. He died at Boston, in New England, in 1751. Allan Ramsay, the painter, was a scholar of Smibert's.

We trace, with glowing breast and piercing look,
The curious gall'ry of th' illustrious duke,
Where all those masters of the arts divine,
With pencils, pens, and chisels greatly shine,
Immortalizing the Augustan age,
On medals, canvass, stone, or written page.
Profiles and busts originals express,
And antique scrolls, old ere we knew the press.
For's love to science, and each virtuous Scot,
May days unnumber'd be great Cosmus' lot!

The sweet Hesperian fields you'll next explore,
'Twixt Arno's banks and Tiber's fertile shore.
Now, now I wish my organs could keep pace,
With my fond muse and you these plains to trace;
We'd enter Rome with an uncommon taste,
And feed our minds on every famous waste;
Amphitheatres, columns, royal tombs,
Triumphal arches, ruins of vast domes,
Old aerial aqueducts, and strong-pav'd roads,
Which seem to've been not wrought by men but gods.

These view'd, we'd then survey with utmost care
What modern Rome produces fine or rare;
Where buildings rise with all the strength of art,
Proclaiming their great architects desert.
Which citron shades surround and jessamin,
And all the soul of Raphael shines within.
Then we'd regale our ears with sounding notes
Which warble tuneful thro' the beardless throats,
Join'd with the vibrating harmonious strings,
And breathing tubes, while the soft eunuch sings.

Of all those dainties take a hearty meal;
But let your resolution still prevail:
Return, before your pleasure grow a toil,
To longing friends, and your own native soil:

Preserve your health, your virtue still improve,
Hence you'll invite protection from above.

1721.

TO R. H. B.

O B——! cou'd these fields of thine
Bear, as in Gaul, the juicy vine,
How sweet the bonny grape wou'd shine
On wau's where now,
Your apricots and peaches fine
Their branches bow.

Since human life is but a blink,
Why should we then its short joys sink?
He disna live that canna link
The glass about,
When warm'd with wine, like men we think,
And grow mair stout.

The cauldrife carlies clog'd wi' care,
Wha gathering gear gang hyt and gare,
If ram'd wi' red, they rant and rair,
Like mirthfu' men,
It soothly shaws them they can spare
A rowth to spend.

What soger, when with wine he's bung,
Did e'er complain he had been dung,
Or of his toil, or empty spung?
Na, o'er his glass,
Nought but braw deeds employ his tongue,
Or some sweet lass.

Yet trouth 'tis proper we should stint
Oursells to a fresh mod'rate pint,
Why shou'd we the blyth blessing mint
To waste or spill,
Since aften when our reason's tint,
We may do ill.

Let's set these hair-brain'd fowk in view,
That when they're stupid, mad, and fow,
Do brutal deeds,which aft they rue
For a' their days,
Which frequently prove very few
To such as these.

Then let us grip our bliss mair sicker,
And tap our heal and sprightly liquor,
Which sober tane, makes wit the quicker,
And sense mair keen,
While graver heads that's muckle thicker
Grane wi' the spleen.

May ne'er sic wicked fumes arise
In me, shall break a' sacred ties,
And gar me like a fool despise,
With stiffness rude,
Whatever my best friends advise,
Tho' ne'er so gude.

'Tis best then to evite the sin
Of bending till our sauls gae blin,
Lest, like our glass, our breasts grow thin,
And let fowk peep
At ilka secret hid within,
That we should keep.

1721.

TO MR. JOSEPH MITCHELL,

ON THE SUCCESSFUL REPRESENTATION OF A TRAGEDY.(1)

But jealousy, dear Jos., which aft gives pain
To scrimpit sauls, I own myself right vain
To see a native trusty friend of mine
Sae brawly 'mang our bleezing billies shine.
Yes, wherefore no, shaw them the frozen north
Can tow'ring minds with heav'nly heat bring forth:
Minds that can mount with an uncommon wing,
And frae black heath'ry-headed mountains sing,
As saft as he that haughs Hesperian treads,
Or leans beneath the aromatic shades;
Bred to the love of lit'rature and arms,
Still something great a Scottish bosom warms;
Tho' nurs'd on ice, and educate in snaw,
Honour and liberty eggs him up to draw
A hero's sword, or an heroic quill,
The monstrous faes of right and wit to kill.
Well may ye further in your leal design
To thwart the gowks, and gar the brethren tine
The wrang opinion which they lang have had,
That a' which mounts the stage is surely bad.

(1) The piece here alluded to was "Fatal Extravagance," a Tragedy, 1721; which Mitchell himself afterwards avowed to have been written by Aaron Hill, Esq. who, with a generosity peculiar to himself, allowed this author, who was himself a tolerable poet, both the reputation and the profits of this piece, to extricate him from some pecuniary embarrassments brought on by his own extravagance: thus in the very title of the piece conveying a gentle reproof, while he generously relieved him. Mitchell was the author of two volumes of miscellaneous poems; "Fatal Extravagance," a tragedy, 8vo, 1721; the "Fatal Extravagance," enlarged, 12mo, 1725; "The Highland Fair," a ballad opera, 8vo, 1731. Mitchell died in 1738.

Stupidly dull!—but fools ay fools will be,
And nane's sae blind as them that winna see.
Where's vice and virtue set in juster light?
Where can a glancing genius shine mair bright?
Where can we human life review mair plain,
Than in the happy plot and curious scene?
If in themsells sic fair designs were ill,
We ne'er had priev'd the sweet dramatic skill,
Of Congreve, Addison, Steele, Rowe, and Hill;
Hill, wha the highest road to fame doth chuse,
And has some upper seraph for his muse;
It maun be sae, else how could he display,
With so just strength, the great tremendous day?
Sic patterns, Joseph, always keep in view,
Ne'er fash if ye can please the thinking few,
Then, spite of malice, worth shall have its due.

TO ROBERT YARDE OF DEVONSHIRE.

Frae northern mountains clad with snaw,
Where whistling winds incessant blaw,
In time now when the curling-stane
Slides murm'ring o'er the icy plain,
What sprightly tale in verse can Yarde
Expect frae a cauld Scottish bard,
With brose and bannocks poorly fed,
In hoden grey right hashly clad,
Skelping o'er frozen hags with pingle,
Picking up peets to beet his ingle,
While sleet that freezes as it fa's,
Thecks as with glass the divot waws
Of a laigh hut, where sax the gither
Ly heads and thraws on craps of heather?

Thus, Sir, of us the story gaes,
By our mair dull and scornfu' faes:
But let them tauk, and gowks believe,
While we laugh at them in our sleeve:
For we, nor barbarous nor rude,
Ne'er want good wine to warm our blood;
Have tables crown'd, and heartsome beils,
And can in Cumin's, Don's, or Steil's,
Be serv'd as plenteously and civil
As you in London at the Devil.
You, Sir, yourself, wha came and saw,
Own'd that we wanted nought at a',
To make us as content a nation
As any is in the creation.

This point premis'd, my canty muse
Cocks up her crest without excuse,
And scorns to screen her natural flaws
With ifs, and buts, and dull because;
She pukes her pens, and aims a flight
Thro' regions of internal light,
Frae fancy's field these truths to bring,
That you should hear, and she should sing.

Langsyne, when love and innocence
Were human nature's best defence,
Ere party jars made lawtith less,
By cleathing 't in a monkish dress;
Then poets shaw'd these evenly roads
That lead to dwellings of the gods.
In these dear days, well kend of fame,
Divini vates was their name:
It was, and is, and shall be ay,
While they move in fair virtue's way:
Tho' rarely we to stipends reach,
Yet nane dare hinder us to preach.

Believe me, Sir, the nearest way
To happiness is to be gay;
For spleen indulg'd will banish rest
Far frae the bosoms of the best;
Thousands a year's no worth a prin,
Whene'er this fashious guest gets in:
But a fair competent estate
Can keep a man frae looking blate;
Say eithly it lays to his hand
What his just appetites demand.
Wha has, and can enjoy, O wow!
How smoothly may his minutes flow!
A youth thus blest with manly frame,
Enliven'd with a lively flame,
Will ne'er with sordid pinch control
The satisfaction of his soul.
Poor is that mind, ay discontent,
That canna use what God has lent,
But envious girns at a' he sees,
That are a crown richer than he's;
Which gars him pitifully hane,
And hell's ase-middins rake for gain;
Yet never kens a blythsome hour,
Is ever wanting, ever sour.

Yet ae extreme shou'd never make
A man the gowden mean forsake,
It shaws as much a shallow mind,
And ane extravagantly blind,
If careless of his future fate,
He daftly wastes a good estate,
And never thinks till thoughts are vain,
And can afford him nought but pain.
Thus will a joiner's shavings bleeze,
Their low will for some seconds please,

But soon the glaring leam is past,
And cauldrife darkness follows fast;
While slaw the faggots large expire,
And warm us with a lasting fire.
Then neither, as I ken ye will,
With idle fears your pleasures spill;
Nor with neglecting prudent care,
Do skaith to your succeeding heir:
Thus steering cannily thro' life,
Your joys shall lasting be and rife.
Give a' your passions room to reel,
As lang as reason guides the wheel:
Desires, tho' ardent, are nae crime,
When they harmoniously keep time;
But when they spang o'er reason's fence,
We smart for't at our ain expence.
To recreate us we're allow'd,
But gaming deep boils up the blood,
And gars ane at groom-porter's, ban
The Being that made him a man,
When his fair gardens, house, and lands,
Are fa'n amongst the sharpers' hands.
A cheerfu' bottle sooths the mind,
Gars carles grow canty, free, and kind,
Defeats our care, and heals our strife,
And brawly oils the wheels of life;
But when just quantums we transgress,
Our blessing turns the quite reverse.
To love the bonny smiling fair,
Nane can their passions better ware;
Yet love is kittle and unruly,
And shou'd move tentily and hooly;
For if it get o'er meikle head,
'Tis fair to gallop ane to dead:

O'er ilka hedge it wildly bounds,
And grazes on forbidden grounds,
Where constantly like furious range
Poortith, diseases, death, revenge:
To toom anes poutch to daunty clever,
Or have wrang'd husband probe ane's liver,
Or void ane's saul out thro' a shanker,
In faith 't wad any mortal canker.
Then wale a virgin worthy you,
Worthy your love and nuptial vow;
Syne frankly range o'er a' her charms,
Drink deep of joy within her arms;
Be still delighted with her breast,
And on her love with rapture feast.
May she be blooming, saft, and young,
With graces melting from her tongue;
Prudent and yielding to maintain
Your love, as well as you her ain.
Thus with your leave, Sir, I've made free
To give advice to ane can gi'e
As good again:—but as mass John
Said, when the sand tald time was done,
"Ha'e patience, my dear friends, a wee,
And take ae ither glass frae me;
And if ye think there's doublets due,
I shanna bauk the like frae you."

AN EPISTLE FROM MR. WILLIAM STARRAT.

Ae windy day last owk, I'll ne'er forget,
I think I hear the hail-stanes rattling yet;

On Crochan-buss my hirdsell took the lee,
As ane wad wish, just a' beneath my ee:
I in the bield of yon auld birk-tree side,
Poor cauldrife Coly whing'd aneath my plaid.
Right cozylie was set to ease my stumps,
Well hap'd with bountith hose and twa-sol'd pumps;
Syne on my four-hours luncheon chew'd my cood,
Sic kilter pat me in a merry mood;
My whistle frae my blanket nook I drew,
And lilted owre thir twa three lines to you.

Blaw up my heart-strings, ye Pierian quines,
That gae the Grecian bards their bonny rhymes,
And learn'd the Latin lowns sic springs to play,
As gars the world gang dancing to this day.

In vain I seek your help;—'tis bootless toil
With sic dead ase to muck a moorland soil;
Give me the muse that calls past ages back,
And shaws proud southern sangsters their mistak,
That frae their Thames can fetch the laurel north,
And big Parnassus on the firth of Forth.

Thy breast alane this gladsome guest does fill
With strains that warm our hearts like cannel gill,
And learns thee, in thy umquhile gutcher's tongue,
The blythest lilts that e'er my lugs heard sung.
Ramsay! for ever live; for wha like you,
In deathless sang, sic life-like pictures drew?
Not he wha whilome with his harp cou'd ca'
The dancing stanes to big the Theban wa';
Nor he (shame fa's fool head!) as stories tell,
Cou'd whistle back an auld dead wife frae hell;
Nor e'en the loyal brooker of bell trees,
Wha sang with hungry wame his want of fees;
Nor Habby's drone, cou'd with thy wind-pipe please:
When, in his well-ken'd clink, thou manes the death

Of Lucky Wood and Spence, (a matchless skaith
To Canigate,) sae gash thy gab-trees gang,
The carlines live for ever in thy sang.
Or when thy country bridal thou pursues,
To red the regal tulzie sets thy muse,
Thy soothing sangs bring canker'd carles to ease,
Some loups to Lutter's pipe, some birls babies.
But gin to graver notes thou tunes thy breath,
And sings poor Sandy's grief for Adie's death,
Or Matthew's loss, the lambs in concert mae,
And lanesome Ringwood yowls upon the brae.
Good God! what tuneless heart-strings wadna twang,
When love and beauty animate the sang?
Skies echo back, when thou blaws up thy reed
In Burchet's praise for clapping of thy head:
And when thou bids the paughty Czar stand yon,
The wandought seems beneath thee on his throne.
Now, be my saul, and I have nought behin,
And well I wat fause swearing is a sin,
I'd rather have thy pipe and twa three sheep,
Than a' the gowd the monarch's coffers keep.
Coly, look out, the few we have's gane wrang,
This se'enteen owks I have not play'd sae lang;
Ha! Crummy, ha! trowth I man quat my sang;
But, lad, neist mirk we'll to the haining drive,
When in fresh lizar they get spleet and rive:
The royts will rest, and gin ye like my play,
I'll whistle to thee all the live-lang day.

TO MR. WILLIAM STARRAT,

ON RECEIVING THE FOREGOING.

Frae fertile fields where nae curs'd ethers creep,
To stang the herds that in rash busses sleep;

Frae where Saint Patrick's blessings freed the bogs
Frae taids, and asks, and ugly creeping frogs;
Welcome to me the sound of Starrat's pipe,
Welcome as westlan winds or berries ripe,
When speeling up the hill, the dog-days' heat
Gars a young thirsty shepherd pant and sweat:
Thus while I climb the muses' mount with care,
Sic friendly praises give refreshing air.
O! may the lasses loo thee for thy pains,
And may thou lang breathe healsome o'er the plains:
Lang mayst thou teach, with round and nooked lines,
Substantial skill, that's worth rich siller mines;
To shaw how wheels can gang with greatest ease,
And what kind barks sail smoothest o'er the seas;
How wind-mills should be made; and how they work
The thumper that tells hours upon the kirk;
How wedges rive the aik; how pullisees
Can lift on highest roofs the greatest trees,
Rug frae its roots the craig of Edinburgh castle,
As easily as I cou'd break my whistle;
What pleugh fits a wet soil, and whilk the dry;
And mony a thousand useful things forby.
I own 'tis cauld encouragement to sing,
When round ane's lugs the blatran hail-stanes ring;
But feckfu' folks can front the bauldest wind,
And slunk thro' moors, and never fash their mind.
Aft have I wid thro' glens with chorking feet,
When neither plaid nor kelt cou'd fend the weet:
Yet blythly wald I bang out o'er the brae,
And stend o'er burns as light as ony rae,
Hoping the morn might prove a better day.
Then let's to lairds and ladies leave the spleen,
While we can dance and whistle o'er the green.
Mankind's account of good and ill's a jest,
Fancy's the rudder, and content's a feast.

Dear friend of mine! ye but o'er meikle reese
The lawly mints of my poor moorland muse,
Wha looks but blate, when even'd to ither twa,
That lull'd the deel, or bigg'd the Theban wa';
But trowth 'tis natural for us a' to wink
At our ain fauts, and praises frankly drink:
Fair fa' ye then, and may your flocks grow rife,
And may nae elf twin crummy of her life.

The sun shines sweetly, a' the lift looks blue,
O'er glens hing hov'ring clouds of rising dew;
Maggy, the bonniest lass of a' our town,
Brent is her brow, her hair a curly brown,
I have a tryst with her, and man away,
Then ye'll excuse me till anither day,
When I've mair time; for shortly I'm to sing
Some dainty sangs, that sall round Crochan ring.

TO MR. GAY,

ON HEARING THE DUCHESS OF QUEENSBURY COMMEND SOME OF HIS POEMS. (1)

Dear lad, wha linkan o'er the lee,
Sang Blowzalind and Bowzybee,
And, like the lavrock, merrily
Wak'd up the morn,
When thou didst tune, with heartsome glee,
Thy bog-teed horn.

(1) Gay was a great admirer of the poems of Ramsay, particularly of his "Gentle Shepherd;" and they afterwards became personally acquainted, when Gay visited Scotland with the duke and duchess of Queensbury.

To thee frae edge of Pentland height,
Where fawns and fairies take delight,
And revel a' the live-lang night
O'er glens and braes,
A bard that has the second sight,
Thy fortune spaes.

Now lend thy lug, and tent me, Gay,
Thy fate appears like flow'rs in May,
Fresh, flourishing, and lasting ay,
Firm as the aik,
Which envious winds, when critics bray,
Shall never shake.

Come, shaw your loof;—ay, there's the line
Foretells thy verse shall ever shine,
Dawted whilst living by the nine,
And a' the best,
And be, when past the mortal line,
Of fame possest.

Immortal Pope, and skilfu' John, (1)
The learned Leach frae Callidon,
With mony a witty dame and don,
O'er lang to name,
Are of your roundels very fon,
And sound your fame.

And sae do I, wha reese but few,
Which nae sma' favour is to you;
For to my friends I stand right true,
With shanks a-spar;
And my good word (ne'er gi'en but due)
Gangs unko far.

(1) Dr. John Arbuthnot.

Here mettled men my muse maintain,
And ilka beauty is my friend;
Which keeps me canty, brisk, and bein,
Ilk wheeling hour,
And a sworn fae to hatefu' spleen,
And a' that's sour.

But bide ye, boy, the main's to say;
Clarinda, bright as rising day,
Divinely bonny, great and gay,
Of thinking even,
Whase words, and looks, and smiles, display
Full views of heaven:

To rummage nature for what's braw,
Like lilies, roses, gems, and snaw,
Compar'd with hers, their lustre fa',
And bauchly tell
Her beauties, she excels them a',
And 's like hersell:

As fair a form as e'er was blest
To have an angel for a guest;
Happy the prince who is possest
Of sic a prize,
Whose virtues place her with the best
Beneath the skies:

O sonsy Gay! this heavenly born,
Whom ev'ry grace strives to adorn,
Looks not upon thy lays with scorn;
Then bend thy knees,
And bless the day that ye was born
With arts to please.

She says thy sonnet smoothly sings,
Sae ye may craw and clap your wings,
And smile at ethercapit stings,
With careless pride,
When sae much wit and beauty brings
Strength to your side.

Lilt up your pipes, and rise aboon
Your Trivia, and your Moorland tune,
And sing Clarinda late and soon,
In towring strains,
Till gratefu' gods cry out, "Well done!"
And praise thy pains.

Exalt thy voice, that all around
May echo back the lovely sound,
Frae Dover cliffs with samphire crown'd,
To Thule's shore,
Where northward no more Britain's found,
But seas that rore.

Thus sing;—whilst I frae Arthur's height,
O'er Cheviot glowr with tired sight,
And langing wish, like raving wight,
To be set down,
Frae coach and sax baith trim and tight,
In London town.

But lang I'll gove and bleer my ee,
Before, alake! that sight I see;
Then (best relief) I'll strive to be
Quiet and content,
And streek my limbs down easylie
Upon the bent.

There sing the gowans, broom, and trees,
The crystal burn and westlin breeze,
The bleeting flocks and bisy bees,
And blythsome swains,
Wha rant and dance, with kiltit dees,
O'er mossy plains.

Farewell;—but ere we part, let's pray,
God save Clarinda night and day,
And grant her a' she'd wish to ha'e,
Withoutten end.—
Nae mair at present I've to say,
But am your friend.

AN EPISTLE TO JOSIAH BURCHET,

ON HIS BEING CHOSEN MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT.

My Burchet's name well pleas'd I saw
Amang the chosen leet,
Wha are to give Britannia law,
And keep her rights complete.

O may the rest wha fill the house
Be of a mind with thee,
And British liberty espouse;
We glorious days may see.

The name of patriot is mair great
Than heaps of ill-won gear;
What boots an opulent estate,
Without a conscience clear?

While sneaking sauls for cash wad trock
Their country, God, and king,
With pleasure we the villain mock,
And hate the worthless thing.

With a' your pith, the like of you,
Superior to what's mean,
Shou'd gar the trockling rogues look blue,
And cow them laigh and clean.

Down with them,—down with a' that dare
Oppose the nation's right;
Sae may your fame, like a fair star,
Through future times shine bright.

Sae may kind heaven propitious prove,
And grant whate'er ye crave;
And him a corner in your love,
Wha is your humble slave.

TO MR. DAVID MALLOCH,

ON HIS DEPARTURE FROM SCOTLAND.

Since fate, with honour, bids thee leave
Thy country for a while,
It is nae friendly part to grieve,
When powers propitious smile.

The task assign'd thee's great and good,
To cultivate two Grahams,
Wha from bauld heroes draw their blood,
Of brave immortal names.

Like wax, the dawning genius takes
Impressions thrawn or even;
Then he wha fair the moulding makes,
Does journey-work for heaven.

The sour weak pedants spoil the mind
Of those beneath their care,
Who think instruction is confin'd
To poor grammatic ware.

But better kens my friend, and can
Far nobler plans design,
To lead the boy up to a man
That's fit in courts to shine.

Frae Grampian heights (some may object)
Can you sic knowledge bring?
But those laigh tinkers ne'er reflect,
Some sauls ken ilka thing,

With vaster ease, at the first glance,
Than misty minds that plod
And thresh for thought, but ne'er advance
Their stawk aboon their clod.

But he that could, in tender strains,
Raise Margaret's plaining shade, (1)
And paint distress that chills the veins,
While William's crimes are red;

Shaws to the world, cou'd they observe,
A clear deserving flame:—

(1) "William and Margaret," a ballad, in imitation of the old manner, wherein the strength of thought and passion is more observed than a rant of unmeaning words.

Thus I can reese without reserve,
When truth supports my theme.

Gae, lad, and win a nation's love,
By making those in trust,
Like Wallace's Achates, (1) prove
Wise, generous, brave, and just.

Sae may his Grace th' illustrious sire
With joy paternal see
Their rising blaze of manly fire,
And pay his thanks to thee.

1728.

TO WILLIAM SOMERVILLE OF WARWICKSHIRE.

Sir, I have read, and much admire
Your muse's gay and easy flow,
Warm'd with that true Idalian fire,
That gives the bright and cheerful glow.

I con'd each line with joyous care,
As I can such from sun to sun;
And, like the glutton o'er his fare,
Delicious, thought them too soon done.

The witty smile, nature, and art,
In all your numbers so combine,

(1) The heroic Sir John Graham, the glory of his name, the dearest friend of the renowned Sir William Wallace, and the ancestor of his Grace the duke of Montrose.

As to complete their just desert,
And grace them with uncommon shine.

Delighted we your muse regard,
When she, like Pindar's, spreads her wings,
And virtue being its own reward,
Expresses by "The Sister Springs."

Emotions tender crowd the mind,
When with the royal bard you go,
To sigh in notes divinely kind,
"The Mighty fall'n on mount Gilbo."

Much surely was the virgin's joy,
Who with the Iliad had your lays;
For, ere and since the siege of Troy,
We all delight in love and praise.

These heaven-born passions, such desire,
I never yet cou'd think a crime;
But first-rate virtues, which inspire
The soul to reach at the sublime.

But often men mistake the way,
And pump for fame by empty boast,
Like your "Gilt Ass," who stood to bray,
Till in a flame his tail he lost.

Him th' incurious bencher hits,
With his own tale, so tight and clean,
That while I read, streams gush by fits
Of hearty laughter from my een.

Old Chaucer, bard of vast ingine;
Fontaine and Prior, who have sung

Blyth tales the best; had they heard thine
On Lob, they'd own themselves out-done.

The plot's pursu'd with so much glee,
The too officious dog and priest,
The squire oppress'd, I own for me
I never heard a better jest.

Pope well describ'd an ombre game,
And king revenging captive queen;
He merits, but had won more fame,
If author of your "Bowling-green."

You paint your parties, play each bowl,
So natural, just, and with such ease,
That while I read, upon my soul,
I wonder how I chance to please.

Yet I have pleas'd, and please the best;
And sure to me laurels belong,
Since British fair, and 'mong the best,
Somerville's consort likes my song.

Ravish'd I heard th' harmonious fair
Sing, like a dweller of the sky,
My verses with a Scotian air;
Then saints were not so blest as I.

In her the valu'd charms unite,
She really is what all wou'd seem,
Gracefully handsome, wise, and sweet;
'Tis merit to have her esteem.

Your noble kinsman, her lov'd mate,
Whose worth claims all the world's respect,

Met in her love a smiling fate,
Which has, and must have good effect.

You both from one great lineage spring,
Both from de Somervile, who came
With William, England's conquering king,
To win fair plains and lasting fame:

Whichnour, he left to's eldest son,
That first-born chief you represent;
His second came to Caledon,
From whom our Somer'le takes descent.

On him and you may fate bestow
Sweet balmy health and cheerful fire,
As long's ye'd wish to live below,
Still blest with all you wou'd desire.

O Sir! oblige the world, and spread
In print (1) those and your other lays;
This shall be better'd while they read,
And after-ages sound your praise.

I cou'd enlarge;—but if I shou'd
On what you've wrote, my ode wou'd run
Too great a length; your thoughts so crowd,
To note them all I'd ne'er have done.

Accept this offering of a muse,
Who on her Pictland hills ne'er tires;
Nor shou'd, when worth invites, refuse
To sing the person she admires.

(1) Since the writing of this ode, Mr. Somerville's poems are printed by Mr. Lintot in an 8vo. volume.—Somerville died in 1742. This *superior* to Pope is allowed by Johnson "to write well, for a gentleman."

AN EPISTLE FROM MR. SOMERVILLE.

Near fair Avona's silver tide,
Whose waves in soft meanders glide,
I read to the delighted swains
Your jocund songs and rural strains.
Smooth as her streams your numbers flow,
Your thoughts in vary'd beauties show,
Like flow'rs that on her borders grow,
While I survey, with ravish'd eyes,
This friendly gift, (1) my valu'd prize,
Where sister arts, with charms divine,
In their full bloom and beauty shine,
Alternately my soul is blest:
Now I behold my welcome guest,
That graceful, that engaging air,
So dear to all the brave and fair:
Nor has th' ingenious artist shown
His outward lineaments alone,
But in th' expressive draught design'd
The nobler beauties of his mind;
True friendship, love, benevolence,
Unstudied wit and manly sense.
Then as your book I wander o'er,
And feast on the delicious store,
(Like the laborious busy bee,
Pleas'd with the sweet variety,)
With equal wonder and surprise,
I see resembling portraits rise.

(1) Lord Somerville was pleased to send me his own picture, and Mr. Ramsay's Works. In 1730, Somerville concluded a bargain with James Lord Somerville for the reversion of his estate at his death. His connection with Lord Somerville, probably occasioned his poetical correspondence with Ramsay, who was patronized by that nobleman.

Brave archers march in bright array,
In troops the vulgar line the way:
Here the droll figures slily sneer,
Or coxcombs at full length appear:
There woods and lawns, a rural scene,
And swains that gambol on the green.
Your pen can act the pencil's part,
With greater genius, fire, and art.
Believe me, bard, no hunted hind
That pants against the southern wind,
And seeks the streams thro' unknown ways;
No matron in her teeming days,
E'er felt such longings, such desires,
As I to view those lofty spires,
Those domes where fair Edina shrouds
Her tow'ring head amid the clouds.
But oh! what dangers interpose!
Vales deep with dirt, and hills with snows,
Proud winter-floods, with rapid force,
Forbid the pleasing intercourse.
But sure we bards, whose purer clay
Nature has mixt with less allay,
Might soon find out an easier way.
Do not sage matrons mount on high,
And switch their broom-sticks thro' the sky;
Ride post o'er hills, and woods, and seas,
From Thule to the Hesperides? (1)
And yet the men of Gresham own,
That this and stranger feats are done
By a warm fancy's power alone.
This granted, why can't you and I
Stretch forth our wings and cleave the sky?

(1) The Scilly islands were so called by the ancients, as Mr. Camden observes.

Since our poetic brains, you know,
Than theirs must more intensely glow.
Did not the Theban swan take wing,
Sublimely soar, and sweetly sing?
And do not we, of humbler vein,
Sometimes attempt a loftier strain,
Mount sheer out of the reader's sight,
Obscurely lost in clouds and night?
Then climb your Pegasus with speed,
I'll meet thee on the banks of Tweed;
Not as our fathers did of yore,
To swell the flood with crimson gore;
Like the Cadmean murd'ring brood,
Each thirsting for his brother's blood;
For now all hostile rage shall cease,
Lull'd in the downy arms of peace,
Our honest hands and hearts shall join
O'er jovial banquets, sparkling wine.
Let Peggy at thy elbow wait,
And I shall bring my bonny Kate.
But hold:—oh! take a special care
T' admit no prying kirkman there;
I dread the penitential chair.
What a strange figure should I make,
A poor abandon'd English rake;
A squire well born, and six foot high,
Perch'd in that sacred pillory!
Let spleen and zeal be banish'd thence,
And troublesome impertinence,
That tells his story o'er again;
Ill-manners and his saucy train,
And self-conceit, and stiff-rumpt pride,
That grin at all the world beside;
Foul scandal, with a load of lies,
Intrigues, rencounters, prodigies,

Fame's busy hawker, light as air,
That feeds on frailties of the fair:
Envy, hypocrisy, deceit,
Fierce party rage, and warm debate;
And all the hell-hounds that are foes
To friendship and the world's repose.
But mirth instead, and dimpling smiles,
And wit, that gloomy care beguiles;
And joke, and pun, and merry tale,
And toasts, that round the table sail;
While laughter, bursting thro' the crowd
In vollies, tells our joys aloud.
Hark! the shrill piper mounts on high,
The woods, the streams, the rocks reply
To his far-sounding melody.
Behold each lab'ring squeeze prepare
Supplies of modulated air:
Observe Croudero's active bow,
His head still nodding to and fro,
His eyes, his cheeks with raptures glow:
See, see the bashful nymphs advance,
To lead the regulated dance.
Flying still, the swains pursuing,
Yet with backward glances wooing.
This, this shall be the joyous scene;
Nor wanton elves that skim the green,
Shall be so blest, so blyth, so gay,
Or less regard what dotards say.
My rose shall then your thistle greet,
The union shall be more complete;
And in a bottle and a friend,
Each national dispute shall end.

AN ANSWER TO THE FOREGOING.

Sir, I had yours, and own my pleasure,
On the receipt, exceeded measure.
You write with so much sp'rit and glee,
Sae smooth, sae strong, correct, and free,
That any he (by you allow'd
To have some merit) may be proud.
If that's my fault, bear you the blame,
Wha've lent me sic a lift to fame.
Your ain tow'rs high, and widens far,
Bright glancing like a first-rate star,
And all the world bestow due praise
On the Collection of your lays;
Where various arts and turns combine,
Which even in parts first poets shine:
Like Matt and Swift ye sing with ease,
And can be Waller when you please.
Continue, Sir, and shame the crew
That's plagu'd with having nought to do;
Whom fortune in a merry mood
Has overcharg'd with gentle blood,
But has deny'd a genius fit
For action or aspiring wit;
Such kenna how t' employ their time,
And think activity a crime.
Ought they to either do or say,
Or walk, or write, or read, or pray,
When money, their factotum's able
To furnish them a numerous rabble,
Who will, for daily drink and wages,
Be chairmen, chaplains, clerks, and pages?
Could they, like you, employ their hours
In planting these delightful flowers,

Which carpet the poetic fields,
And lasting funds of pleasure yields;
Nae mair they'd gaunt and gove away,
Or sleep or loiter out the day,
Or waste the night, damning their sauls,
In deep debauch and bawdy brawls;
Whence pox and poverty proceed,
An early eild, and spirits dead.
Reverse of you, and him you love,
Whose brighter spirit tow'rs above
The mob of thoughtless lords and beaux,
Who in his ilka action shows
"True friendship, love, benevolence,
Unstudy'd wit and manly sense."
Allow here what you've said yoursell,
Nought can b' exprest so just and well.
To him and her, worthy his love,
And every blessing from above,
A son is given, God save the boy,
For theirs and every Som'ril's joy.
Ye wardens! round him take your place,
And raise him with each manly grace;
Make his meridian virtues shine,
To add fresh lustres to his line:
And many may the mother see
Of such a lovely progeny.

Now, Sir, when Boreas nae mair thuds
Hail, snaw, and sleet, frae blacken'd clouds;
While Caledonian hills are green,
And a' her straths delight the een;
While ilka flower with fragrance blows,
And a' the year its beauty shows;
Before again the winter lour,
What hinders then your northern tour?

Be sure of welcome; nor believe
These wha an ill report would give
To Ed'nburgh and the land of cakes,
That nought what's necessary lacks.
Here plenty's goddess frae her horn
Pours fish and cattle, claith and corn,
In blyth abundance; and yet mair,
Our men are brave, our ladies fair:
Nor will North Britain yield for fouth
Of ilka thing, and fellows couth,
To ony but her sister South.

True, rugged roads are cursed dreigh,
And speats aft roar frae mountains heigh;
The body tires, (poor tottering clay!)
And likes with ease at hame to stay;
While sauls stride warlds at ilka stend,
And can their widening views extend.
Mine sees you, while you cheerfu' roam
On sweet Avona's flow'ry howm,
There recollecting, with full view,
These follies which mankind pursue;
While, conscious of superior merit,
You rise with a correcting spirit,
And as an agent of the gods,
Lash them with sharp satyric rods:
Labour divine!—Next, for a change,
O'er hill and dale I see you range
After the fox or whidding hare,
Confirming health in purest air;
While joy frae heights and dales resounds,
Rais'd by the holla, horn and hounds:
Fatigu'd, yet pleas'd, the chace out run,
I see the friend, and setting sun,
Invite you to the temp'rate bicker,
Which makes the blood and wit flow quicker.

The clock strickes twelve, to rest you bound,
To save your health by sleeping sound.
Thus with cool head and healsome breast,
You see new day stream frae the east;
Then all the muses round you shine,
Inspiring ev'ry thought divine:
Be long their aid:—your years and blisses,
Your servant Allan Ramsay wishes.

1729.

AN EPISTLE FROM W. SOMERVILLE

TO ALLAN RAMSAY, ON PUBLISHING HIS SECOND VOLUME OF POEMS.

Hail! Caledonian bard! whose rural strains
Delight the list'ning hills, and cheer the plains;
Already polish'd by some hand divine,
Thy purer ore what furnace can refine?
Careless of censure, like the sun shine forth
In native lustre and intrinsic worth.
To follow nature is by rules to write,
She led the way and taught the Stagyrite:
From her the critic's taste, the poet's fire,
Both drudge in vain till she from heav'n inspire.
By the same guide instructed how to soar,
Allan is now what Homer was before.
Ye chosen youths wha dare like him aspire,
And touch with bolder hand the golden lyre,
Keep nature still in view; on her intent,
Climb by her aid the dang'rous steep ascent

To lasting fame.—Perhaps a little art
Is needful to plane o'er some rugged part;
But the most labour'd elegance and care
T' arrive at full perfection must despair;
Alter, blot out, and write all o'er again,
Alas! some venial sins will yet remain.
Indulgence is to human frailty due,
E'en Pope has faults, and Addison a few;
But those, like mists that cloud the morning ray,
Are lost and vanish in the blaze of day.
Tho' some intruding pimple find a place
Amid the glories of Clarinda's face,
We still love on, with equal zeal adore,
Nor think her less a goddess than before.
Slight wounds in no disgraceful scars shall end,
Heal'd by the balm of some good-natur'd friend.
In vain shall canker'd Zoilus assail,
While Spence (1) presides, and Candour holds the scale:
His gen'rous breast nor envy sours, nor spite;
Taught by his founder's motto (2) how to write,
Good manners guides his pen; learn'd without pride;
In dubious points not forward to decide:
If here and there uncommon beauties rise,
From flow'r to flow'r he roves with glad surprise:
In failings no malignant pleasure takes,
Nor rudely triumphs over small mistakes;
No nauseous praise, no biting taunts offend,
W' expect a censor, and we find a friend.
Poets improv'd by his correcting care,
Shall face their foes with more undaunted air,
Stripp'd of their rags, shall like Ulysses shine, (3)
With more heroic port and grace divine.

(1) Mr. Spence, poetry professor in Oxford, and fellow of New College.
(2) William of Wickham, founder of New College in Oxford, and of Winchester College. His motto is, "Manners maketh man."
(3) Vide Hom. Od. lib. xxiv.

No pomp of learning, and no fund of sense,
Can e'er atone for lost benevolence.
May Wickham's sons, who in each art excel,
And rival ancient bards in writing well,
While from their bright examples taught, they sing,
And emulate their flights with bolder wing,
From their own frailties learn the humbler part,
Mildly to judge in gentleness of heart.
Such critics, Ramsay, jealous for our fame,
Will not with malice insolently blame,
But lur'd by praise, the haggard muse reclaim.
Retouch each line till all is just and neat,
A whole of proper parts, a work almost complete.
So when some beauteous dame, a reigning toast,
The flow'r of Forth, and proud Edina's boast,
Stands at her toilet in her tartan plaid,
And all her richest head-gear trimly clad;
The curious handmaid, with observant eye,
Corrects the swelling hoop that hangs awry;
Thro' ev'ry plait her busy fingers rove,
And now she plys below, and then above;
With pleasing tattle entertains the fair,
Each ribbon smooths, adjusts each rambling hair,
Till the gay nymph in her full lustre shine,
And Homer's Juno was not half so fine. (1)

1729.

RAMSAY'S ANSWER TO THE FOREGOING.

Again, like the return of day,
From Avon's banks the cheering lay

(1) Vide Hom. Il. lib. xiv.

Warms up a muse was well nigh lost
In depths of snow and chilling frost;
But generous praise the soul inspires,
More than rich wines and blazing fires.
Tho' on the Grampians I were chain'd,
And all the winter on me rain'd;
Altho' half starv'd, my sp'rit would spring
Up to new life to hear you sing.
I take even criticism kind,
That sparkles from so clear a mind:
Friends ought and may point out a spot,
But enemies make all a blot.
Friends sip the honey from the flow'r;
All's verjuice to the waspish sour.
With more of nature than of art,
From stated rules I often start,
Rules never studied yet by me;
My muse is British, bold and free,
And loves at large to frisk and bound
Unmankl'd o'er poetic ground.
I love the garden wild and wide,
Where oaks have plum-trees by their side;
Where woodbines and the twisting vine
Clip round the pear-tree and the pine;
Where mixt jonckeels and gowans grow,
And roses 'midst rank clover blow,
Upon a bank of a clear strand,
Its whimplings led by nature's hand;
Tho' docks and bramble here and there,
May sometimes cheat the gardener's care,
Yet this to me's a paradise,
Compar'd with prime cut plots and nice,
Where nature has to art resign'd,
Till all looks mean, stiff, and confin'd.

May still my notes of rustic turn
Gain more of your respect than scorn;
I'll hug my fate, and tell sour fools,
I'm more oblig'd to heav'n than schools.
Heaven Homer taught: the critic draws
Only from him, and such their laws:
The native bards first plunge the deep,
Before the artful dare to leap.
I've seen myself right many a time
Copy'd in diction, mode, and rhyme.
Now, Sir, again let me express
My wishing thoughts in fond address;
That for your health, and love you bear
To two of my chief patrons (1) here,
You'd, when the lavrocks rouse the day,
When beams and dews make blythsome May,
When blooming fragrance glads our isle,
And hills with purple heather smile,
Drop fancy'd ails, with courage stout,
Ward off the spleen, the stone, and gout.
May ne'er such foes disturb your nights,
Or elbow out your day delights.
Here you will meet the jovial train,
Whose clangours echo o'er the plain,
While hounds with gowls both loud and clear,
Well tun'd, delight the hunter's ear,
As they on coursers fleet as wind,
Pursue the fox, hart, hare, or hind:
Delightful game! where friendly ties
Are closer drawn, and health the prize.
We long for, and we wish you here,
Where friends are kind, and claret clear:
The lovely hope of Som'ril's race,
Who smiles with a seraphic grace,

(1) Lord and Lady Somerville.

And the fair sisters of the boy,
Will have, and add much to your joy.
Give warning to your noble friend;
Your humble servant shall attend,
A willing Sancho and your slave,
With the best humour that I have,
To meet you on that river's shore,
That Britons now divides no more.

ALLAN RAMSAY.

TO DONALD M'EWEN, JEWELLER,

AT ST. PETERSBURG.

How far frae hame my friend seeks fame!
And yet I canna wyte ye,
T' employ your fire, and still aspire
By virtues that delyte ye.

Shou'd fortune lour, 'tis in your power,
If heaven grant balmy health,
T' enjoy ilk hour a soul unsow'r;
Content's nae bairn of wealth.

It is the mind that's not confin'd
To passions mean and vile,
That's never pin'd, while thoughts refin'd
Can gloomy cares beguile.

Then Donald may be e'en as gay
On Russia's distant shore,
As on the Tay, where usquebae
He us'd to drink before.

But howsoe'er, haste gather gear,
And syne pack up your treasure;
Then to Auld Reekie come and beek ye,
And close your days with pleasure.

TO THE SAME,

ON RECEIVING A PRESENT OF A GOLD SEAL, WITH HOMER'S HEAD.

Thanks to my frank ingenious friend:
Your present's most genteel and kind,
Baith rich and shining as your mind:
And that immortal laurell'd pow,
Upon the gem sae well design'd
And execute, sets me on low.

The heavenly fire inflames my breast,
Whilst I unweary'd am in quest
Of fame, and hope that ages niest
Will do their Highland bard the grace,
Upon their seals to cut his crest,
And blythest strakes of his short face.

Far less great Homer ever thought
(When he, harmonious beggar! sought
His bread thro' Greece) he should be brought
Frae Russia's shore by captain Hugh, (1)
To Pictland plains, sae finely wrought
On precious stone, and set by you.

(1) Captain Hugh Eccles, master of a fine merchant-ship, which he lost in the unhappy fire at St. Petersburg.

1728.

TO HIS FRIENDS IN IRELAND,

WHO, ON A REPORT OF HIS DEATH, MADE AND PUBLISHED SEVERAL ELEGIES, &c.

Sighing shepherds of Hibernia,
Thank ye for your kind concern a',
When a fause report beguiling,
Prov'd a draw-back on your smiling:
Dight your een, and cease your grieving,
Allan's hale, and well, and living,
Singing, laughing, sleeping soundly,
Cowing beef, and drinking roundly;
Drinking roundly rum and claret,
Ale and usquæ, bumpers fair out,
Supernaculum but spilling,
The least diamond (1) drawing, filling;
Sowsing sonnets on the lasses,
Hounding satires at the asses,
Smiling at the surly critics,
And the pack-horse of politics;
Painting meadows, shaws, and mountains,
Crooking burns, and flowing fountains;
Flowing fountains, where ilk gowan
Grows about the borders glowan,
Swelling sweetly, and inviting
Poets' lays, and lovers meeting;
Meeting kind to niffer kisses,
Bargaining for better blisses.

(1) See the note on p. 288, vol. i.

Hills in dreary dumps now lying,
And ye zephyrs swiftly flying,
And ye rivers gently turning,
And ye Philomelas mourning,
And ye double sighing echoes,
Cease your sobbing, tears, and hey-ho's!
Banish a' your care and grieving,
Allan's hale, and well, and living;
Early up on mornings shining,
Ilka fancy warm refining;
Giving ilka verse a burnish,
That man second volume furnish,
To bring in frae lord and lady
Meikle fame, and part of ready;
Splendid thing of constant motion,
Fish'd for in the southern ocean;
Prop of gentry, nerve of battles,
Prize for which the gamester rattles;
Belzie's banes, deceitfu', kittle,
Risking a' to gain a little.
Pleasing Philip's tunefu' tickle,
Philomel, and kind Arbuckle;
Singers sweet, baith lads and lasses,
Tuning pipes on hill Parnassus,
Allan kindly to you wishes
Lasting life and rowth of blisses;
And that he may, when ye surrender
Sauls to heaven, in numbers tender
Give a' your fames a happy heezy,
And gratefully immortalize ye.

AN EPISTLE

FROM A GENTLEMAN IN THE COUNTRY, TO HIS FRIEND IN EDINBURGH.

O FRIEND! to smoke and din confin'd,
Which fouls your claiths and frets your mind,
And makes you rusty look and crabbed,
As if you were bep—'d or scabbed,
Or had been going thro' a dose
Of mercury to save your nose;
Let me advise you, out of pity,
To leave the chatt'ring, stinking city,
Where pride and emptiness take place
Of plain integrity and grace;
Where hideous screams wad kill a cat,
Of wha buys this? or wha buys that?
And thro' the day, frae break o' morning,
The buz of bills, protests, and horning;
Besides the everlasting squabble
Among the great and little rabble,
Wha tear their lungs, and deave your ears,
With all their party hopes and fears;
While rattling o'er their silly cant,
Learn'd frae the Mercury and Courant,
About the aid that comes frae Russia,
And the neutrality of Prussia,
Of France's tyranny and slavery,
Their faithless fickleness and knavery;
Of Spain, the best beloved son
Of the old whore of Babylon,
The warden of her whips and faggots,
And all her superstitious maggots;

Of all our gambols on the green,
To aid the bauld Imperial Queen,
When the Most Christian shoars to strike,
And fasheous Frederic gars her fike;
Of Genoa, and the resistance
Of Corsica without assistance;
Of wading var-freging Savona,
And breaking fiddles at Cremona;
What jaws of blood and gore it cost,
Before a town is won or lost;
How much the allied armies have been a'
Propp'd by the monarch of Sardinia;
Of popes, stadtholders, faith's defenders,
Generals, marshals, and pretenders;
Of treaties, ministers, and kings,
And of a thousand other things;
Of all which their conceptions dull
Suits with the thickness of the scull.
Yet with such stuff ane man be worried,
That's thro' your city's gauntlet hurried.
But ah! (ye cry) ridotts and dances,
With lasses trig that please your fancies,
For five or six gay hours complete,
In circles of th' assembly sweet;
Wha can forsake so fair a field,
Where all to conquering beauty yield?
No doubt, while in this am'rous fit,
Your next plea's boxes and the pit;
Where wit and humour of the age
Flow entertaining from the stage;
Where, if the drama's right conducted,
Ane's baith diverted and instructed.—
Well, I shall grant it 'grees wi' reason;
These have their charms in proper season,

But must not be indulg'd too much,
Lest they the saften'd saul bewitch,
And faculties in fetters bind,
That are for greater ends design'd.
Then rouze ye frae these dozing dreams,
And view with me the golden beams
Which Phœbus ilka morning pours
Upon our plains adorn'd with flow'rs;
With me thro' howms and meadows stray,
Where whimpling waters make their way;
Here frae the aiks and elms around,
You'll hear the saft melodious sound
Of a' the quiristers on high,
Whase notes re-echo thro' the sky,
Better than concerts in your town,
Yet do not cost you half a crown:
Here blackbirds, mavises, and linnets,
Excel your fiddles, flutes, and spinnets;
Our jetty rooks e'en far excels
Your strim-strams and your jingling bells,
As do the cloven-footed tribes,
And rustics whistling o'er the glybes.
Here we with little labour gain
Firm health, with all its joyful train;
Silent repose, the cheerful smile
Which can intruding cares beguile:
Here fragrant flow'rs of tinctures bright,
Regale the smell and please the sight,
And make the springs of life to flow
Through every vein with kindly glow,
Giving the cheek a rosy tint
Excelling all the arts of paint.
If cauld or rain keep us within,
We've rooms neat, warm, and free from din;

Where, in the well-digested pages,
We can converse with by-past ages;
And oft, to set our dumps adrift,
We smile with Prior, Gay and Swift;
Or with great Newton take a flight
Amongst the rolling orbs of light;
With Milton, Pope, and all the rest
Who smoothly copy nature best:
From those inspir'd, we often find
What brightens and improves the mind,
And carry men a pitch beyond
Those views of which low souls are fond.
This hinders not the jocund smile
With mirth to mix the moral style;
In conversation this being right,
As is in painting shade and light.
This is the life poets have sung,
Wish'd for, my friend, by auld and young;
By all who would heaven's favour share:
Where least ambition, least of care
Disturbs the mind; where virtuous ease
And temperance never fail to please.

ALLAN RAMSAY.

PENNYCUICK,
May 1748.

AN EPISTLE

TO JAMES CLERK, ESQ. OF PENNYCUICK.

BLYTH may he be wha o'er the haugh,
All free of care, may sing and laugh;
Whase owsen lunges o'er a plain
Of wide extent, that's a' his ain!

No humdrum fears need break his rest,
Wha's not with debts and duns opprest;
Wha has enough, even though it's little,
If it can ward frae dangers kittle,
That chiels, fated to skelp vile dubs thro',
For living are oblig'd to rub thro',
To fend by troaking, buying, selling,
The profit's aft no worth the telling.
When aft'er, in ane honest way,
We've gained by them that timely pay,
In comes a customer, looks big,
Looks generous, and scorns to prig,
Buys heartily, bids mark it down,
He'll clear before he leaves the town;
Which, tho' they say't, they ne'er intend it;
We're bitten sair, but canna mend it.
A year wheels round, we hing about;
He's sleeping, or he's just gane out:
If catch'd, he glooms like ony devil,
Swears braid, and calls us damn'd uncivil:
Or aft our doited lugs abuses,
With a ratrime of cant excuses;
And promises they stoutly ban to,
Whilk they have ne'er a mind to stand to.
As lang's their credit hads the feet o't,
They hound it round to seek the meat o't,
Till jointly we begin to gaud them,
And Edinburgh grows o'er het to had them:
Then aff they to the country scowp,
And reave us baith of cash and hope.
Syne we, the lovers of fair dealing,
Wha deem ill payment next to stealing,
Rin wood with care how we shall pay
Our bills against the destin'd day;

For lame excuse the banker scorns,
And terrifies with caps and horns;
Nae trader stands of trader awe,
But nolens volens gars him draw.
'Tis hard to be laigh poortith's slave,
And like a man of worth behave;
Wha creeps beneath a lade of care,
When interest points he's gleg and gare,
And will at naithing stap or stand,
That reeks him out a helping hand.
But here, dear Sir, do not mistake me,
As if grace did sae far forsake me,
As to allege that all poor fellows,
Unblest with wealth, deserv'd the gallows.
Na, God forbid that I should spell
Sae vile a fortune to mysell!
Tho' born to not ae inch of ground,
I keep my conscience white and sound;
And tho' I ne'er was a rich heaper,
To make that up I live the cheaper;
By this ae knack I've made a shift
To drive ambitious care a-drift;
And now in years and sense grown auld,
In ease I like my limbs to fauld.
Debts I abhor, and plan to be
Frae shochling trade and danger free,
That I may, loos'd frae care and strife,
With calmness view the edge of life;
And when a full ripe age shall crave,
Slide easily into my grave.
Now seventy years are o'er my head,
And thirty mae may lay me dead;
Should dreary care then stunt my muse,
And gar me aft her jogg refuse?

Sir, I have sung, and yet may sing,
Sonnets that o'er the dales may ring,
And in gash glee couch moral saw,
Reese virtue and keep vice in awe;
Make villany look black and blue,
And give distinguish'd worth its due;
Fix its immortal fame in verse,
That men till doomsday shall rehearse.
I have it even within my pow'r,
The very kirk itself to scow'r,
And that you'll say's a brag right bauld;
But did not Lindsay this of auld?
Sir David's satyres help'd our nation
To carry on the Reformation,
And gave the scarlet whore a box
Mair snell than all the pelts of Knox.
Thus far, Sir, with no mean design,
To you I've poured out my mind,
And sketch'd you forth the toil and pain
Of them that have their bread to gain
With cares laborious, that you may,
In your blest sphere be ever gay,
Enjoying life with all that spirit
That your good sense and virtues merit.
Adieu, and ma' ye as happy be
As ever shall be wish'd by me,

Your ever obliged,

Humble servant,

ALLAN RAMSAY.

PENNYCUICK, *May* 9, 1755.

1728.

TO A. R. ON THE POVERTY OF THE POETS.

Dear Allan, with your leave, allow me
To ask you but one question civil;
Why thou'rt a poet pray thee show me,
And not as poor as any devil?

I own your verses make me gay,
But as right poet still I doubt ye;
For we hear tell benorth the Tay,
That nothing looks like want about ye.

In answer then, attempt solution,
Why poverty torments your gang?
And by what fortitude and caution
Thou guards thee from its meagre sang?

Yours, &c.

W. L.

THE ANSWER.

Sir,

That mony a thriftless poet's poor,
Is what they very well deserve,
'Cause aft their muse turns common whore,
And flatters fools that let them starve.

Ne'er minding business, they lye,
Indulging sloth, in garret couches,
And gape like gorblins to the sky,
With hungry wames and empty pouches.

Dear billies, tak advice for anes,
If ye'd hope honour by the muse,
Rather to masons carry stanes,
Than for your patrons blockheads chuse:

For there's in nature's secret laws
Of sympath and antipathy,
Which is, and will be still the cause,
Why fools and wits can ne'er agree.

A wee thing serves a cheerfu' mind
That is dispos'd to be contented,
But he nae happiness can find
That is with pride and sloth tormented.

Still cautious to prevent a dun,
With caps and horns on bills and bands;
The sweets of life I quietly cun,
And answer nature's small demands.

Lucky for me, I never sang
Fause praises to a worthless wight,
And still took pleasure in the thrang
Of them wha in good sense delight.

To such I owe what gave the rise
To ought thou in my verse esteems,
And, Phœbe like, in darker skies,
I but reflect their brighter beams.

EPISTLE TO JOHN WARDLAW. (1)

My worthy friend, I here conjure ye,
By the respect I ever bure ye,
You'll let me ken, by your neist letter,
Why ye hae been sae lang my debtor—
I charge ye by these royal names,
Frae Fergus First to Octave James,
As loyalty you still exprest,
To mind your friend whan he's distrest,
Distrest wi' little trading gawin,
And the dreigh income of what's awin,
The curst peremptor, London bills,
That gif return'd, our credit kills.
Then there's the necessars of life,
That crave frae ane that has a wife,
House hawding, baith in milk and meal,
And mutton, beef, and shanks o' veal;
Nay, now and then, aff care to syne
A sneaker, or a waught o' wine;
And that the getlings prove na fools,
They maun be hawden at the schools.
All these require the ready down
Frae us wha live in borrows town,
That neither hae nor barn, nor byre,
Washing, nor elding for our fire;
Nor sheep, nor swine, nor hens, nor geese,
Nor sarking lint, nor claithing fleece.

(1) [* "This poem has not hitherto appeared in any collection of Ramsay's works. It appeared first in the 'Scots Magazine' for 1797, where it is mentioned that Wardlaw was factor for the laird of Gartshore, and was accustomed annually to pay the poet the interest on a bond for £200, due to him by the laird. It is one of the most characteristic of all the productions of Ramsay's muse."—*Chambers.*]

Unless that Dubbies-land be staickit
By us, we e'en may strutt stark naiket
And starve; while ye jouk upo' lands,
Have ilka thing laid to your hands
Of whatsoe'er ye stand in need,
Of your ain growth and your ain breed.
Frae udders of your kine and ewes,
Your cream, your cheese, your butter flows;
Your eggs and chickens (best o' fare)
Are yours, withouten ony care;
The nursing hen asks nae mair pay,
But only what ye fling away;
Whane'er ye like ye cram your creels
Wi' trouts, and pikes, and carps, and eels;
Horse-laids of fruit bob on your trees,
The honey's brought you by the bees;
Roots for your pot you hae in plenty,
Wi' artichokes, and bow-kail dainty;
For gryce and goslings, calves and lamb,
Ye've mickle mair nor can ye cram;
Your bannocks grow upon your strae,
Your barley brings you usquebae.
From what I've said its eith to prove
You should not filthy lucre love;
What use for cash hae landwart lairds,
Unless to play't at dice or cards—
If useless in your pouch, 't wears less,
Until it grows as smooth as glass.
Now, since it obvious is and plain,
That coin sae worthless is and vain
Wi' such as you, let me advise ye
Ne'er let regards for it entice ye,
To haud your hands ower hard about it,
And since we canna fend without it,

Pray gather't up, white, yellow, brown,
And pack it in to our poor town.
Now, either do this same frae hand,
Or keep it, and gie us the land.
Before you e'en set wicked Tray,
That barking sat upo' the strae,
Yet couldna mak a meal of meat o't,
But wadna let poor horsie eat o't.
Wad ye to what I say agree,
Ye soon would ken what drinkers dree.
Thus far, Sir, I have merry been,
As a sworn enemy to spleen,
And hearty friends, like us, weel ken,
There's nought ill said that's no ill ta'en.
My proper view, ye'll eithly find,
Was mainly to put you in mind;
I wad be vext, were ye unkind.
But never having reason gien,
I hope you're still what ye hae been,
As you in mony ways did show it,
The friend and patron of your poet,

A. R.

Dated thus:—From my Palace on the Castle-bank of Edinburgh, June 5th, 45 minutes after 6 o'clock at night, A. D. 1736, and of our age the 51st year.

FABLES AND TALES.

1722—1730.

ADVERTISEMENT.

Some of the following are taken from Messieurs la Fontaine and la Motte, whom I have endeavoured to make speak Scots with as much ease as I can; at the same time aiming at the spirit of these eminent authors, without being too servile a translator. If my manner of expressing a design already invented have any particularity that is agreeable, good judges will allow such imitations to be originals formed upon the idea of another. Others, who drudge at the dull verbatim, are like timorous attendents, who dare not move one pace without their master's leave, and are never from their back but when they are not able to come up with them.

Those amongst them which are my own invention, with respect to the plot as well as the numbers, I leave the reader to find out; or, if he think it worth his while to ask me, I shall tell him.

If this Collection prove acceptable, as I hope it will, I know not how far the love I have for this manner of writing may engage me to be divertingly useful. Instruction in such a dress is fitted for every palate, and strongly imprints a good moral upon the mind. When I think on the "Clock and the Dial," I am never upon the blush, although I should sit in company ten minutes without speaking. The thoughts of the "Fox and Rat" has hindered me sometimes from disobliging a person I

did not much value. "The Wise Lizard" makes me content with low life. "The Judgment of Minos" gives me a disgust at avarice; and "Jupiter's Lottery" helps to keep me humble, though I own it has "e'en enough ado wi't," &c.

A man who has his mind furnished with such a stock of good sense as may be had from those excellent Fables, which has been approved of by ages, is proof against the insults of all those mistaken notions which so much harass human life: And what is life without serenity of mind?

How much of a philosopher is this same moral muse like to make of me!—"But," says one, "ay, ay, you're a canny lad! ye want to make the other penny by her!" —Positively I dare not altogether deny this, no more than if I were a clergyman or physician; and although all of us love to be serviceable to the world, even for the sake of bare naked virtue, yet approbation and encouragement make our diligence still more delightful.

FABLES AND TALES.

Important truths still let your Fables hold,
And moral mysteries with art unfold:
As veils transparent cover, but not hide;
Such metaphors appear, when right apply'd.

Ld. Lansdowne.

AN EPISTLE TO DUNCAN FORBES,

LORD ADVOCATE.

Shut in a closet six foot square,
No fash'd with meikle wealth or care,
I pass the live-lang day;
Yet some ambitious thoughts I have,
Which will attend me to my grave,
Sic busked baits they lay.

These keep my fancy on the wing,
Something that's blyth and snack to sing,
And smooth the runkled brow:
Thus care I happily beguile,
Hoping a plaudit and a smile
Frae best of men, like you.

You wha in kittle casts of state,
When property demands debate,
Can right what is done wrang;
Yet blythly can, when ye think fit,
Enjoy your friend, and judge the wit
And slidness of a sang.

How mony, your reverse, unblest,
Whase minds gae wand'ring thro' a mist,
Proud as the thief in hell,
Pretend, forsooth, they're gentle-fowk,
'Cause chance gi'es them of gear the yowk,
And better chiels the shell!

I've seen a wean aft vex itsell,
And greet because it was not tall:
Heez'd on a board, O! then,
Rejoicing in the artfu' height,
How smirky look'd the little wight,
And thought itsell a man!

Sic bairns are some, blawn up a wee
With splendour, wealth, and quality,—
Upon these stilts grown vain,—
They o'er the pows of poor fowk stride,
And neither are to had nor bide,
Thinking this height their ain.

Now shou'd ane speer at sic a puff,
What gars thee look sae big and bluff?
Is't an attending menzie?
Or fifty dishes on your table?
Or fifty horses in your stable?
Or heaps of glancing cunzie?

Are these the things thou ca's thysell?
Come, vain gigantic shadow, tell!
If thou sayest yes, I'll shaw
Thy picture; mean's thy silly mind,
Thy wit's a croil, thy judgment blind,
And love worth nought ava.

Accept our praise, ye nobly born,
Whom heaven takes pleasure to adorn
With ilka manly gift;
In courts or camps to serve your nation,
Warm'd with that generous emulation
Which your forbears did lift.

In duty, with delight, to you
Th' inferior world do justly bow,
While you're the maist deny'd;
Yet shall your worth be ever priz'd,
When strutting nathings are despis'd,
With a' their stinking pride.

This to set aff as I am able,
I'll frae a Frenchman thigg a fable,
And busk it in a plaid;
And tho' it be a bairn of Motte's, (1)
When I have taught it to speak Scots,
I am its second dad.

(1) Mons. la Motte, who has written lately a curious Collection of Fables, from which the following is imitated.

FABLE I.

THE TWA BOOKS.

Twa books, near neighbours in a shop,—
The tane a gilded Turky fop;
The tither's face was weather-beaten,
And cauf-skin jacket sair worm-eaten.
The corky, proud of his braw suit,
Curl'd up his nose, and thus cry'd out:
"Ah! place me on some fresher binks!
Figh! how this mouldy creature stinks!
How can a gentle book like me
Endure sic scoundrel company!
What may fowk say to see me cling
Sae close to this auld ugly thing,
But that I'm of a simple spirit,
And disregard my proper merit!"—
Quoth grey-baird, "Whisht, Sir, with your din!
For a' your meritorious skin,
I doubt if you be worth within:
For as auld-fashion'd as I look,
May be I am the better book."—
"O heavens! I canna thole the clash
Of this impertinent auld hash;
I winna stay ae moment langer!"—
"My lord, please to command your anger;
Pray only let me tell you that——"
"What wad this insolent be at?
Rot out your tongue! pray, master Symmer,
Remove me frae this dinsome rhymer;
If you regard your reputation,
And us of a distinguish'd station,

Hence frae this beast let me be hurried,
For with his stour and stink I'm worried."
Scarce had he shook his paughty crap,
When in a customer did pap;
He up douse Stanza lifts, and eyes him,
Turns o'er his leaves, admires and buys him:
"This book," said he, "is good and scarce,
The saul of sense in sweetest verse."
But reading title of gilt cleathing,
Cries, "Gods! wha buys this bonny naithing?
Nought duller e'er was put in print:
Wow! what a deal of Turky's tint!"

Now, Sir, t' apply what we've invented:
You are the buyer represented;
And may your servant hope
My lays shall merit your regard,
I'll thank the gods for my reward,
And smile at ilka fop.

FABLE II.

THE CLOCK AND THE DIAL.

Ae day a Clock wad brag a Dial,
And put his qualities to trial,
Spake to him thus: "My neighbour, pray
Can'st tell me what's the time of day?"
The Dial said, "I dinna ken."—
"Alake! what stand ye there for then?"—
"I wait here till the sun shines bright,
For nought I ken but by his light."—

"Wait on," quoth Clock, "I scorn his help;
Baith night and day my lane I skelp:
Wind up my weights but anes a week,
Without him I can gang and speak;
Nor like an useless sumph I stand,
But constantly wheel round my hand:
Hark, hark! I strike just now the hour,
And I am right—ane, twa, three, four."
While thus the Clock was boasting loud,
The bleezing sun brak thro' a cloud:
The Dial, faithfu' to his guide,
Spake truth, and laid the thumper's pride:
"Ye see," said he, "I've dung you fair,
'Tis four hours and three quarters mair.
"My friend," he added, "count again,
And learn a wee to be less vain;
Ne'er brag of constant clavering cant,
And that you answers never want;
For you're not ay to be believ'd,
Wha trust to you may be deceiv'd.
Be counsell'd to behave like me;
For when I dinna clearly see,
I always own I dinna ken,
And that's the way of wisest men."

FABLE III.

THE RAM AND THE BUCK.

A RAM, the father of a flock,
Wha'd mony winters stood the shock
Of northern winds and driving snaw,
Leading his family in a raw,

Through wraiths that clad the laigher field,
And drave them frae the lowner bield,
To crop contented frozen fare,
With honesty on hills blown bare:
This Ram, of upright hardy spirit,
Was really a horn'd head of merit.
Unlike him was a neighbouring Goat,
A mean-saul'd, cheating, thieving sot,
That tho' possest of rocks the prime,
Crown'd with fresh herbs and rowth of thyme,
Yet, slave to pilfering, his delight
Was to break gardens ilka night,
And round him steal, and aft destroy
Even things he never could enjoy;
The pleasure of a dirty mind,
That is sae viciously inclin'd.

Upon a barrowing day, when sleet
Made twinters and hog-wedders bleet,
And quake with cauld; behind a ruck
Met honest Toop and sneaking Buck:
Frae chin to tail clad with thick hair,
He bad defiance to thin air;
But trusty Toop his fleece had riven,
When he amang the birns was driven;
Half-naked the brave leader stood,
His look compos'd, unmov'd his mood:
When thus the Goat, that had tint a'
His credit baith with great and sma',
Shun'd by them as a pest, wad fain
New friendship with this worthy gain:
"Ram, say shall I give you a part
Of mine? I'll do 't with all my heart!
'Tis yet a lang cauld month to Beltan,
And ye've a very ragged kelt on;

Accept, I pray, what I can spare,
To clout your doublet with my hair."
"No," says the Ram, "Tho' my coat's torn,
Yet ken, thou worthless, that I scorn
To be oblig'd at any price
To sic as you, whose friendship's vice!
I'd have less favour frae the best,
Clad in a hatefu' hairy vest
Bestow'd by thee, than as I now
Stand but ill drest in native woo'.
Boons frae the generous make ane smile;
From miscreants, make receivers vile."

FABLE IV.

THE LOVELY LASS AND THE MIRROR.

A NYMPH with ilka beauty grac'd,
Ae morning by her toilet plac'd,
Where the leal-hearted Looking-glass
With truths addrest the lovely Lass.
"To do ye justice, heavenly fair,
Amaist in charms ye may compare
With Venus' sell; but mind amaist,
For tho' you're happily possest
Of ilka grace which claims respect,
Yet I see faults you should correct.
I own they only trifles are,
Yet of importance to the fair.
What signifies that patch o'er braid,
With which your rosy cheek's o'erlaid?

Your natural beauties you beguile,
By that too much affected smile;
Saften that look; move ay with ease,
And you can never fail to please."
Those kind advices she approv'd,
And mair her monitor she lov'd,
Till in came visitants a threave;
To entertain them she man leave
Her Looking-glass.—They fleetching praise
Her looks, her dress, and a' she says,
Be't right or wrang; she's hale complete,
And fails in nathing fair or sweet.
Sae much was said, the bonny Lass
Forgat her faithfu' Looking-glass.

Clarinda, this dear beauty's you;
The mirror is ane good and wise,
Wha, by his counsels just, can shew
How nobles may to greatness rise.
God bless the wark!—If you're opprest
By parasites with fause design,
Then will sic faithfu' mirrors best
These under-plotters countermine.

FABLE V.

JUPITER'S LOTTERY.

Anes Jove, by ae great act of grace,
Wad gratify his human race,
And order'd Hermes, in his name,
With tout of trumpet to proclaim

A royal lott'ry frae the skies,
Where ilka ticket was a prize.
Nor was there need for ten per cent.
To pay advance for money lent;
Nor brokers nor stock-jobbers here
Were thol'd to cheat fowk of their gear.
The first-rate benefits were health,
Pleasures, honours, empire, and wealth;
But happy he to whom wad fa'
Wisdom, the highest prize of a'.
Hopes of attaining things the best,
Made up the maist feck of the rest.
Now ilka ticket sald with ease,
At altars, for a sacrifice:
Jove a' receiv'd, ky, gaits, and ewes,
Moor-cocks, lambs, dows, or bawbee-rows;
Nor wad debar e'en a poor droll,
Wha nought cou'd gi'e but his parol.
Sae kind was he no to exclude
Poor wights for want of wealth or blood;
Even whiles the gods, as record tells,
Bought several tickets for themsells.
When fou, and lots put in the wheel,
Aft were they turn'd to mix them weel;
Blind Chance to draw, Jove order'd syne,
That nane with reason might repine.
He drew, and Mercury was clark,
The number, prize, and name to mark.
Now hopes by millions fast came forth,
But seldom prizes of mair worth,
Sic as dominion, wealth, and state,
True friends, and lovers fortunate.
Wisdom at last, the greatest prize,
Comes up:—aloud clark Hermes cries,

"Number ten thousand! Come, let's see
The person blest!"—Quoth Pallas, "Me!"
Then a' the gods for blythness sang,
Thro' heaven glad acclamations rang;
While mankind, grumbling, laid the wyte
On them, and ca'd the hale a byte.
"Yes," cry'd ilk ane, with sobbing heart,
"Kind Jove has play'd a parent's part,
Wha did this prize to Pallas send,
While we're sneg'd off at the wob's end!"
Soon to their clamours Jove took tent,
To punish which to wark he went:
He straight with Follies fill'd the wheel.
In Wisdom's place they did as weel;
For ilka ane wha Folly drew,
In their conceit a' sages grew.
Sae, thus contented, a' retir'd,
And ilka fool himself admir'd.

FABLE VI.

THE MISER AND MINOS.

Short syne there was a wretched miser,
With pinching had scrap'd up a treasure;
Yet frae his hoords he doughtna take
As much wou'd buy a mutton-stake,
Or take a glass to comfort nature,
But scrimply fed on crumbs and water:
In short, he famish'd 'midst his plenty,
Which made surviving kindred canty,

Wha scarcely for him pat on black,
And only in his loof a plack,
Which even they grudg'd. Sic is the way
Of them wha fa' upon the prey;
They'll scarce row up the wretch's feet,
Sae scrimp they make his winding-sheet,
Tho' he shou'd leave a vast estate,
And heaps of gowd like Arthur's Seat.

Well, down the starving ghaist did sink,
Till it fell on the Stygian brink;
Where auld Van Charon stood and raught
His wither'd loof out for his fraught;
But them that wanted wherewitha',
He dang them back to stand and blaw.
The Miser lang being us'd to save,
Fand this, and wadna passage crave;
But shaw'd the ferryman a knack,
Jumpt in, swam o'er, and hain'd his plack.
Charon might damn, and sink, and roar;
But a' in vain, he gain'd the shore.
Arriv'd, the three-pow'd dog of hell
Gowl'd terrible a triple yell;
Which rous'd the snaky sisters three,
Wha furious on this wight did flee,
Wha'd play'd the smuggler on their coast,
By which Pluto his dues had lost;
Then brought him for this trick sae hainous
Afore the bench of justice Minos.

The case was new, and very kittle,
Which puzzled a' the court na little;
Thought after thought with unco' speed
Flew round within the judge's head,
To find what punishment was due
For sic a daring crime, and new.

Shou'd he the plague of Tantal feel!
Or stented be on Ixion's wheel?
Or stung wi' bauld Prometheus' pain?
Or help Sysiph to row his stane?
Or sent amang the wicked rout,
To fill the tub that ay rins out?—
"No! no!" continues Minos, "no!
Weak are our punishments below
For sic a crime; he man be hurl'd
Straight back again into the world.
I sentence him to see and hear
What use his friends make of his gear."

FABLE VII.

THE APE AND THE LEOPARD.

The Ape and Leopard, beasts for show,
The first a wit, the last a beau,
To make a penny at a fair,
Advertis'd a' their parts sae rare.
The tane gae out with meikle wind,
His beauty 'boon the brutal kind:
Said he, "I'm kend baith far and near,
Even kings are pleas'd when I appear;
And when I yield my vital puff,
Queens of my skin will make a muff;
My fur sae delicate and fine,
With various spots does sleekly shine."
Now lads and lasses fast did rin
To see the beast with bonny skin.

His keeper shaw'd him round about;
They saw him soon, and soon came out.
But master Monkey, with an air,
Hapt out, and thus harangu'd the fair:
"Come, gentlemen, and ladies bonny,
I'll give ye pastime for your money!
I can perform, to raise your wonder,
Of pawky tricks mae than a hunder.
My cousin Spotty, true he's braw,
He has a curious suit to shaw,
And naithing mair. But frae my mind
Ye shall blyth satisfaction find:
Sometimes I'll act a chiel that's dull,
Look thoughtfu', grave, and wag my scull;
Then mimic a light-headed rake,
When on a tow my houghs I shake;
Sometime, like modern monks, I'll seem
To make a speech, and naithing mean.
But come away, ye needna speer
What ye're to pay, I'se no be dear;
And if ye grudge for want of sport,
I'll give it back t' ye at the port."
The Ape succeeded; in fowk went;
Stay'd long, and came out well content.
Sae much will wit and spirit please,
Beyond our shape, and brawest claiths.
How mony, ah! of our fine gallants
Are only Leopards in their talents!

FABLE VIII.

THE ASS AND THE BROCK.

Upon a time a solemn Ass
Was dand'ring thro' a narrow pass,
Where he forgather'd with a Brock,
Wha him saluted frae a rock,—
Speer'd how he did? how markets gade?
What's a' ye'r news? and how is trade?
How does Jock Stot and Lucky Yad,
Tam Tup, and Bucky, honest lad?—
Reply'd the Ass, and made a heel,
"E'en a' the better that ye're weel:
But Jackanapes and snarling Fitty
Are grown sae wicked, (some ca's 't witty,)
That we wha solid are and grave,
Nae peace on our ain howms can have.
While we are bisy gathering gear,
Upon a brae they'll sit and sneer.
If ane shou'd chance to breathe behin',
Or ha'e some slaver at his chin,
Or 'gainst a tree shou'd rub his arse,
That's subject for a winsome farce.
There draw they me, as void of thinking:
And you, my dear, famous for stinking;
And the bauld birsy bair, your frien',
A glutton, dirty to the een,
By laughing dogs and apes abus'd,
Wha is 't can thole to be sae us'd!"
"Dear me! heh! wow! and say ye sae?"
Return'd the Brock:—"I'm unko wae,

To see this flood of wit break in!
O scour about, and ca't a sin;
Stout are your lungs, your voice is loud,
And ought will pass upon the crowd."
The Ass thought this advice was right,
And bang'd away with a' his might:
Stood on a knowe among the cattle,
And furiously 'gainst wit did rattle;
Pour'd out a deluge of dull phrases;
While dogs and apes leugh and made faces.
Thus a' the angry Ass held forth
Serv'd only to augment their mirth.

FABLE IX.

THE FOX AND THE RAT.

The lion and the tyger lang maintain'd
A bloody weir; at last the lion gain'd.
The royal victor strak the earth with awe,
And the four-footed world obey'd his law.
Frae ilka species deputies were sent,
To pay their homage due, and compliment
Their sov'reign liege, wha'd gar the rebels cour
And own his royal right and princely power.
After dispute, the moniest votes agree
That Reynard should address his majesty,
Ulysses-like, in name of a' the lave;
Wha thus went on:—"O prince! allow thy slave
To reese thy brave achievements and renown,
Nane but thy daring front shou'd wear the crown,

Wha art like Jove, whase thunderbolt can make
The heavens be hush, and a' the earth to shake;
Whase very gloom, if he but angry nods,
Commands a peace, and flegs th' inferior gods.
Thus thou great king, hast by thy conqu'ring paw
Gi'en earth a shog, and made thy will a law:
Thee a' the animals with fear adore,
And tremble if thou with displeasure roar;
O'er a' thou canst as eith thy sceptre sway,
As badrans can with cheeping rottans play."
This sentence vex'd the envoy Rottan sair;
He threw his gab, and girn'd; but durst nae mair;
The monarch pleas'd with Lowry, wha durst gloom?
A warrant's ordered for a good round sum,
Which Dragon, lord-chief-treasurer, must pay
To sly-tongu'd Fleechy on a certain day;
Which secretary Ape in form wrote down,
Sign'd, Lion, and a wee beneath, Baboon.—
'Tis given the Fox.—Now Bobtail, tap o' kin,
Made rich at anes, is nor to had nor bin!
He dreams of nought but pleasure, joy, and peace,
Now blest with wealth to purchase hens and geese.
Yet in his loof he hadna tell'd the gowd;
And yet the Rottan's breast with anger glow'd;
He vow'd revenge, and watch'd it night and day;
He took the tid when Lowry was away,
And thro' a hole into his closet slips,
There chews the warrant a' in little nips.
Thus what the Fox had for his flatt'ry gotten,
E'en frae a Lion, was made nought by an offended Rottan.

FABLE X.

THE CATERPILLAR AND THE ANT.

A PENSY Ant, right trig and clean,
Came ae day whidding o'er the green;
Where, to advance her pride, she saw
A Caterpillar moving slaw.
"Good ev'n t' ye, mistress Ant," said he;
"How's a' at hame? I'm blyth to s' ye!"
The saucy Ant view'd him with scorn,
Nor wad civilities return;
But gecking up her head, quoth she,—
"Poor animal! I pity thee;
Wha scarce can claim to be a creature,
But some experiment of Nature,
Whase silly shape displeas'd her eye,
And thus unfinish'd was flung bye.
For me, I'm made with better grace,
With active limbs, and lively face;
And cleverly can move with ease
Frae place to place where'er I please;
Can foot a minuet or a jig,
And snoov't like ony whirly-gig;
Which gars my jo aft grip my hand,
Till his heart pitty-pattys, and——
But laigh my qualities I bring,
To stand up clashing with a thing,—
A creeping thing,—the like of thee,
Not worthy of a farewell t' ye!"
The airy Ant syne turn'd awa,
And left him with a proud gaffa.

The Caterpillar was struck dumb,
And never answer'd her a mum:
The humble reptile fand some pain,
Thus to be banter'd with disdain.
But tent neist time the Ant came by,
The worm was grown a Butterfly;
Transparent were his wings and fair,
Which bare him flight'ring thro' the air;
Upon a flower he stapt his flight,
And thinking on his former slight,
Thus to the Ant himself addrest:
"Pray, Madam, will ye please to rest?
And notice what I now advise:
Inferiors ne'er too much despise,
For fortune may gi'e sic a turn,
To raise aboon ye what ye scorn.
For instance, now I spread my wing
In air, while you're a creeping thing."

FABLE XI.

THE TWA CATS AND THE CHEESE.

Twa Cats anes on a cheese did light,
To which baith had an equal right;
But disputes, sic as aft arise,
Fell out a sharing of the prize.
"Fair play," said ane, "ye bite o'er thick,
Thae teeth of yours gang wonder quick!
Let's part it, else lang or the moon
Be chang'd, the kebuck will be doon."

But wha's to do't? They're parties baith,
And ane may do the other skaith.
Sae with consent away they trudge,
And laid the cheese before a judge,—
A monkey with a campsho face,
Clerk to a justice-of-the-peace.
A judge he seem'd in justice skill'd,
When he his master's chair had fill'd.
Now umpire chosen for division,
Baith sware to stand by his decision.
Demure he looks; the cheese he pales;
He prives, it's good; ca's for the scales;
His knife whops throw't, in twa it fell;
He puts ilk haff in either shell.
Said he, "We'll truly weigh the case,
And strictest justice shall have place."
Then lifting up the scales, he fand
The tane bang up, the other stand;
Syne out he took the heaviest haff,
And eat a knoost o't quickly aff;
And try'd it syne:—it now prov'd light.
"Friend Cats," said he, "we'll do ye right!"
Then to the ither haff he fell,
And laid till't teughly tooth and nail;
Till weigh'd again, it lightest prov'd.
The judge, wha this sweet process lov'd,
Still weigh'd the case, and still ate on,
Till clients baith were weary grown;
And tenting how the matter went,
Cry'd, "Come, come, Sir, we're baith content!"—
"Ye fools!" quoth he, "and justice too
"Man be content as well as you."
Thus grumbled they, thus he went on,—
Till baith the haves were near-hand done.

Poor Pousies now the daffin saw,
Of gawn for nignyes to the law;
And bill'd the judge, that he wad please
To give them the remaining cheese.
To which his worship grave reply'd;
"The dues of court man first be paid.
Now, justice pleas'd, what's to the fore
Will but right scrimply clear your score;
That's our decreet: gae hame and sleep,
And thank us ye're win aff sae cheap!"

FABLE XII.

THE CAMELEON.

Twa travellers, as they were wa'king,
'Bout the Cameleon fell a ta'king;
Sic think it shaws them mettled men,
To say I've seen, and ought to ken.
Says ane, "It's a strange beast indeed!
Four-footed, with a fish's head;
A little bowk, with a lang tail,
And moves far slawer than a snail;
Of colour like a blawart blue—"
Reply'd his nibour, "That's no true;
For well I wat his colour's green,
If ane may true his ain twa een;
For I in sun-shine saw him fair,
When he was dining on the air."—
"Excuse me," says the ither blade,
"I saw him better in the shade,

And he is blue."—" He's green, I'm sure."—
" Ye lied!"—" And ye're the son of a whore!"
Frae words there had been cuff and kick,
Had not a third come in the nick,
Wha tenting them in this rough mood,
Cry'd, " Gentlemen, what, are ye wood?
What's ye'r quarrel, an 't may be speer'd?"—
" Truth," says the tane; " Sir, ye shall hear't:
The Cameleon, I say he's blue;
He threaps, he's green: now what say you?"—
" Ne'er fash ye'rsells about the matter,"
Says the sagacious arbitrator,
" He's black; sae nane of you are right;
I view'd him well with candle-light;
And have it in my pocket here,
Row'd in my napkin hale and feer."—
" Fy!" said ae cangler, " what d' ye mean?
I'll lay my lugs on 't that he's green."
Said th' ither, " Were I gawn to death,
" I'd swear he's blue, with my last breath."—
" He's black," the judge maintain'd ay stout;
And to convince them, whop'd him out:
But to surprise to ane and a',
The animal was white as snaw.
And thus reprov'd them: " Shallow boys!
Away, away, make nae mair noise!
Ye're a' three wrang, and a' three right;
But learn to own your nibours' sight
As good as yours; your judgment speak,
But never be sae daftly weak,
T' imagine ithers will by force
Submit their sentiments to yours;
As things in various lights ye see,
They'll ilka ane resemble me.

FABLE XIII.

THE TWA LIZARDS.

Beneath a tree, ae shining day,
On a burn bank twa Lizards lay,
Beeking themsells now in the beams,
Then drinking of the cauller streams.
"Waes me!" says ane of them to th' ither,
"How mean and silly live we, brither!
Beneath the moon is ought sae poor,
Regarded less, or mair obscure?
We breathe indeed, and that's just a';
But, forc'd by destiny's hard law,
On earth like worms to creep and sprawl,—
Curst fate to ane that has a saul!
Forby, gin we may trow report,
In Nilus giant-lizards sport,
Ca'd crocodiles: ah! had I been
Of sic a size, upon the green,
Then might I had my skair of fame,
Honour, respect, and a great name;
And men with gaping jaws have shor'd,
Syne like a pagod been ador'd."
"Ah, friend!" replies the ither Lizard,
"What makes this grumbling in thy gizzard?
What cause have ye to be uneasy?
Cannot the sweets of freedom please ye?
We, free frae trouble, toil, or care,
Enjoy the sun, the earth, and air,
The crystal spring, and greenwood shaw,
And beildy holes when tempests blaw.

Why should we fret, look blae or wan,
Tho' we're contemn'd by paughty man?
If sae, let's in return be wise,
And that proud animal despise."
"O fy!" returns th' ambitious beast,
"How weak a fire now warms thy breast!
It breaks my heart to live sae mean;
I'd like t' attract the gazer's een,
And be admir'd. What stately horns
The deer's majestic brow adorns!
He claims our wonder and our dread,
Where'er he heaves his haughty head.
What envy a' my spirit fires,
When he in clearest pools admires
His various beauties with delyte;
I'm like to drown myself with spite."
Thus he held forth; when straight a pack
Of hounds, and hunters at their back,
Ran down a deer before their face,
Breathless and wearied with the chace:
The dogs upon the victim seize,
And beugles sound his obsequies.
But neither men nor dogs took tent
Of our wee Lizards on the bent;
While hungry Bawty, Buff, and Tray,
Devour'd the paunches of the prey.
Soon as the bloody deed was past,
The Lizard wise the proud addrest:
"Dear cousin, now pray let me hear
How wad ye like to be a deer?"
"Ohon!" quoth he, convinc'd and wae,
"Wha wad have thought it anes a-day?
Well, be a private life my fate,
I'll never envy mair the great!

That we are little fowk, that's true;
But sae's our cares and dangers too."

FABLE XIV

MERCURY IN QUEST OF PEACE.

The gods coost out, as story gaes,
Some being friends, some being faes,
To men in a besieged city:
Thus some frae spite, and some frae pity,
Stood to their point with canker'd strictness,
And leftna ither in dog's likeness.
Juno ca'd Venus whore and bawd,—
Venus ca'd Juno scaulding Jad;
E'en cripple Vulcan blew the low;
Apollo ran to bend his bow;
Dis shook his fork, Pallas her shield;
Neptune his grape began to wield.
"What plague!" cries Jupiter, "hey hoy!
Man this town prove anither Troy?
What, will you ever be at odds,
Till mankind think us foolish gods?
Hey! mistress Peace, make haste, appear!"
But madam was nae there to hear.
"Come, Hermes, wing thy heels and head,
And find her out with a' thy speed!
Trowth, this is bonny wark indeed!"
Hermes obeys, and staptna short,
But flies directly to the court;

For sure (thought he) she will be found
On that fair complimenting ground,
Where praises and embraces ran,
Like current coin, 'tween man and man.
But soon, alake! he was beguil'd;
And fand that courtiers only smil'd,
And with a formal flatt'ry treat ye,
That they mair sickerly might cheat ye.
Peace was na there, nor e'er could dwell
Where hidden envy makes a hell.

Niest to the ha', where Justice stands
With sword and balance in her hands,
He flew; no that he thought to find her
Between the accuser and defender;
But sure he thought to find the wench
Amang the fowk that fill the bench,
Sae muckle gravity and grace
Appear'd in ilka judge's face:
Even here he was deceiv'd again,
For ilka judge stack to his ain
Interpretation of the law,
And vex'd themsells with had and draw.

Frae thence he flew straight to the kirk:
In this he prov'd as daft a stirk,
To look for Peace, where never three
In ev'ry point cou'd e'er agree:
Ane his ain gait explain'd a text
Quite contrair to his neighbour next,
And teughly toolied day and night
To gar believers trow them right.

Then sair he sigh'd: "Where can she be?—
"Well thought—the university:
Science is ane, these man agree."
There did he bend his strides right clever,
But is as far mistane as ever;

For here contention and ill-nature
Had runkled ilka learned feature;
Ae party stood for ancient rules,
Anither ca'd the ancients fools;
Here ane wad set his shanks aspar,
And reese the man that sang Troy war;
Anither ca's him Robin Kar.

Well, she's no here!—Away he flies
To seek her amangst families:
Tout! what shou'd she do there, I wonder?
Dwells she with matrimonial thunder,
Where mates, some greedy, some deep drinkers,
Contend with thriftless mates or jinkers?
This says 'tis black; and that wi' spite,
Stiffly maintains and threaps 'tis white.

Weary'd at last, quoth he, "Let's see
How branches with their stocks agree."
But here he fand still his mistake;
Some parents cruel were, some weak;
While bairns ungratefu' did behave,
And wish'd their parents in the grave.

"Has Jove then sent me 'mang thir fowk,"
Cry'd Hermes, "here to hunt the gowk?
Well I have made a waly round,
To seek what is not to be found."
Just on the wing—towards a burn,
A wee piece aff, his looks did turn;
There mistress Peace he chanc'd to see
Sitting beneath a willow-tree.
"And have I found ye at the last?"
He cry'd aloud, and held her fast.
"Here I reside," quoth she, and smil'd,
"With an auld hermit in this wild."—
"Well, Madam," said he, "I perceive
That ane may long your presence crave,

And miss ye still; but this seems plain,
To have ye, ane maun be alane."

FABLE XV.

THE SPRING AND THE SYKE.

Fed by a living Spring, a rill
Flow'd easily adown a hill;
A thousand flowers upon its bank
Flourish'd fu' fair, and grew right rank.
Near to its course a Syke did lye,
Whilk was in summer aften dry,
And ne'er recover'd life again,
But after soaking showers of rain;
Then wad he swell, look big and sprush,
And o'er his margin proudly gush.
Ae day after great waughts of wet,
He with the crystal current met,
And ran him down with unco din.
Said he, "How poorly does thou rin!
See with what state I dash the brae,
Whilst thou canst hardly make thy way."
The Spring, with a superior air,
Said, "Sir, your brag gives me nae care,
For soon's ye want your foreign aid,
Your paughty cracks will soon be laid:
Frae my ain head I have supply,
But you must borrow, else rin dry."

FABLE XVI.

THE PHŒNIX AND THE OWL.

Phœnix the first, th' Arabian lord,
And chief of all the feather'd kind,
A hundred ages had ador'd
The sun with sanctity of mind.

Yet, mortal, ye maun yield to fate;
He heard the summons with a smile,
And, unalarm'd, without regret,
He form'd himsell a fun'ral pile.

A Howlet, bird of mean degree,
Poor, dosen'd, lame, and doited auld,
Lay lurking in a neighb'ring tree,
Cursing the sun loot him be cauld.

Said Phœnix, "Brother, why so griev'd,
To ban the Being gives thee breath?
Learn to die better than thou'st liv'd;
Believe me, there's nae ill in death."

"Believe ye that?" the Owl reply'd:
"Preach as ye will, death is an ill:
When young I ilka pleasure try'd,
But now I die against my will.

"For you, a species by yoursell,
Near eildeens with the sun your god,
Nae ferly 'tis to hear you tell
Ye're tired, and inclin'd to nod.

"It shou'd be sae; for had I been
As lang upon the warld as ye,
Nae tears shou'd e'er drap frae my een,
For tinsel of my hollow tree."

"And what," return'd th' Arabian sage,
"Have ye t' observe ye have not seen?
Ae day's the picture of an age,
'Tis ay the same thing o'er again.

"Come, let us baith together die:
Bow to the sun that gave thee life,
Repent thou frae his beams did flee,
And end thy poortith, pain, and strife.

"Thou wha in darkness took delight,
Frae pangs of guilt could'st ne'er be free:
What won thou by thy shunning light?—
But time flies on, I haste to die."

"Ye'r servant, Sir," replied the Owl,
"I likena in the dark to lowp:
The byword ca's that chiel a fool,
That slips a certainty for hope."

Then straight the zealous feather'd king
To 's aromatic nest retir'd;
Collected sun-beams with his wing,
And in a spicy flame expir'd.

Meantime there blew a westlin gale,
Which to the Howlet bore a coal;
The saint departed on his pile,
But the blasphemer in his hole:

He died for ever.—Fair and bright
The Phœnix frae his ashes sprang.
Thus wicked men sink down to night,
While just men join the glorious thrang.

FABLE XVII.

THE BOY AND THE PIG.

Deep in a narrow craiged Pig
Lay mony a dainty nut and fig.
A greedy Callan, half a sot,
Shot his wee nive into the pot,
And thought to bring as mony out
As a' his fangs could gang about;
But the strait neck o't wadna suffer
The hand of this young foolish truffer,
Sae struted, to return again,
Which gae the gowkie nae sma' pain.
He gowls to be sae disappointed,
And drugs till he has maist disjointed
His shekelbane.—Anither lad
Stood by, wha some mair judgment had;
Said, "Billy, dinna grip at a',
And you with ease a part may draw."
This same advice to men I lend;
Ne'er for o'er much at anes contend,
But take the canniest gate to ease,
And pike out joys by twas and threes.

FABLE XVIII.

THE MAN WITH THE TWA WIVES.

In ancient tales there is a story,
Of ane had twa Wives, whig and tory.
The Carlie's head was now attir'd
With hair, an equal mixture lyart.
His Wives (faith ane might well suffic'd)
Alternately was ay ill pleas'd:
They being reverse to ane another
In age and faith, made a curs'd pother
Whilk of the twa shou'd bear the bell,
And make their man maist like themsell.
Auld Meg the tory took great care
To weed out ilka sable hair,
Plucking out all that look'd like youth,
Frae crown of head to weeks of mouth;
Saying, that baith in head and face,
Antiquity was mark of grace.
But Bess the whig, a raving rump,
Took figmalaries, and wald jump,
With sword and pistol by her side,
And cock a-stride a rowing ride
On the hag-ridden sumph, and grapple
Him hard and fast about the thrapple;
And with her furious fingers whirle
Frae youthfu' black ilk silver curle.
Thus was he serv'd between the twa,
Till no ae hair he had ava.

MORAL.

THE moral of this fable's easy,
But I shall speak it out to please ye.
'Tis an auld saying and a trow,
Between twa stools the arse fa's throw."
Thus Britain's morals are much plucked,
While by two opposites instructed;
Who still contending, have the trick
The strongest truths to contradict;
Tho' orthodox, they'll error make it,
If party opposite has spake it.
Thus are we keytch'd between the twa,
Like to turn deists ane and a'.

FABLE XIX.

THE FABLE OF THE CONDEMNED ASS.

A DREADFUL plague, the like was sindle seen,
Cast mony a beast wame upwards on the green:
By thousands down to Acheron they sank,
To dander ages on the dowie bank,
Because they lay unburied on the sward
The sick survivors cou'dna give them eard.
The wowf and tod with sighing spent the day,
Their sickly stamacks scunner'd at the prey;
Fowls droop the wing, the bull neglects his love;
Scarce crawl the sheep, and weakly horses move:
The bauldest brutes that haunt Numidian glens,
Ly panting out their lives in dreary dens.

Thick lay the dead, and thick the pain'd and weak,
The prospect gart the awfu' Lion quake.
He ca's a council.—"Ah! my friends," said he,
"'Tis for some horrid faut sae mony die;
Sae heaven permits.—Then let us a' confess,
With open breast, our crimes baith mair and less.
That the revengefu' Gods may be appeas'd,
When the maist guilty wight is sacrific'd.
Fa't on the fey'st: I shall first begin,
And awn whate'er my conscience ca's a sin.
The sheep and deer I've worried, now, alace!
Crying for vengeance, glowr me i' the face;
Forby their herd, poor man! to croun my treat,
Limb after limb, with bloody jaws I ate:
Ah, glutton me! what murders have I done!—
Now say about, confess ilk ane as soon
And frank as I."—"Sire," says the pawky Tod,
"Your tenderness bespeaks you haf a god!
Worthy to be the monarch of the grove,
Worthy your friends' and a' your subjects' love.
Your scruples are too nice: what's harts or sheep?
An idiot crowd, which for your board ye keep;
And where's the sin for ane to take his ain?
Faith 'tis their honour when by you they're slain.
Neist, what's their herd?—a man, our deadly fae!
Wha o'er us beasts pretends a fancy'd sway;
And ne'er makes banes o't, when 'tis in his power,
With guns and bows our nation to devour."
He said; and round the courtiers all and each
Applauded Lawrie for his winsome speech.
The tyger, bair, and every powerfu' fur,
Down to the wilcat and the snarling cur,
Confest their crimes:—but wha durst ca' them crimes,
Except themsells?

The Ass, dull thing! neist in his turn confest,
That being with hunger very sair opprest,
In o'er a dike he shot his head ae day,
And rugg'd three mouthfu's aff a ruck of hay:
"But speering leave," said he, "some wicked de'il
Did tempt me from the parish priest to steal."
He said; and all at ains the powerfu' croud,
With open throats, cry'd hastily and loud,
"This gypsie Ass deserves ten deaths to die,
Whase horrid guilt brings on our misery!"
A gaping wolf, in office, straight demands
To have him burnt, or tear him where he stands:
Hanging, he said, was o'er an easy death;
He should in torture yield his latest breath.
What, break a bishop's yard! ah crying guilt!
Which nought can expiate till his blood be spilt.
The Lion signs his sentence, "hang and draw:"
Sae poor lang lugs maun pay the kane for a'.
Hence we may ken, how power has eith the knack
To whiten red and gar the blew seem black:
They'll start at winlestraes, yet never crook,
When Interest bids, to lowp out o'er a stowk.

FABLE XX.

THE GODS OF EGYPT.

Langsyne in Egypt beasts were Gods;
Sae mony that the men turn'd beasts;
Vermin and brutes but house or hald,
Had offerings, temples, and their priests.

Ae day a Rattan, white as milk,
  At a cat's shrine was sacrific'd,
And pompous on the altar bled:
  The victim much god Badrans pleas'd.

The neist day was god Rattan's tour;
  And that he might propitious smile,
A Cat is to his temple brought,
  Priests singing round him a' the while.

Odes, anthems, hymns, in verse and prose,
  With instruments of solemn sound,
Praying the lang-tail'd deity
  To bless their faulds and furrow'd ground.

"O! plague us not with cats," they cry'd,
  "For this we cut ane's throat to thee."—
"A bonny god indeed!" quoth Puss;
  "Can ye believe sae great a lie?

"What am I then that eat your god?
  And yesterday to me ye bow'd;
This day I'm to that vermin offer'd:
  God save us! ye're a senseless crowd."

The close reflection gart them glowr,
  And shook their thoughts haf out of joint;
But rather than be fash'd with thought,
  They gart the ax decide the point.

Thus we're Egyptians ane and a';
  Our passions gods, that gar us swither;
Which, just as the occasion serves,
  We sacrifice to ane anither.

FABLE XXI.

THE SPECTACLES.

Ae day when Jove, the high director,
Was merry o'er a bowl of nectar,
Resolv'd a present to bestow
On the inhabitants below.
Momus, wha likes his joke and wine,
Was sent frae heaven with the propine
Fast thro' the æther fields he whirl'd
His rapid car, and reach'd the warld:
Conven'd mankind, and tald them Jove
Had sent a token of his love;
Considering that they were short-sighted,
That faut shou'd presently be righted.
Syne loos'd his wallet frae the pillions,
And toss'd out spectacles by millions.
There were enow, and ilk ane chose
His pair and cock'd them on his nose;
And thankfully their knees they bended
To heaven, that thus their sight had mended.
Straight Momus hameward took his flight,
Laughing fou' loud, as well he might.
For ye maun ken, 'tis but o'er true,
The glasses were some red, some blue,
Some black, some white, some brown, some green,
Which made the same thing different seem.
Now all was wrong, and all was right,
For ilk believ'd his aided sight,
And did the joys of truth partake,
In the absurdest gross mistake.

FABLE XXII.

THE FOX TURNED PREACHER.

A LEARNED Fox grown stiff with eild,
Unable now in open field,
By speed of foot and clever stends,
To seize and worry lambs and hens;
But Lowry never wants a shift
To help him out at a dead lift.
He cleath'd himsell in reverend dress,
And turn'd a preacher, naething less!
Held forth wi' birr 'gainst wier unjust,
'Gainst theft and gormandizing lust.
Clear was his voice, his tone was sweet,
In zeal and mien he seem'd complete;
Sae grave and humble was his air,
His character shin'd wide and fair.
'Tis said the Lion had a mind
To hear him; but Mess Fox declin'd
That honour: reasons on his side
Said that might snare him into pride:
But sheep and powtry, geese and ducks,
Came to his meeting-hole in flocks;
Of being his prey they had nae fear,
His text the contrary made clear.
"Curst be that animal voracious,"
Cry'd he, "sae cruel and ungracious,
That chuses flesh to be his food,
And takes delight in waughting blood!—
What, live by murder!—horrid deed!
While we have trees, and ilka mead,

Finely enrich'd with herbs and fruits,
To serve and please the nicest brutes.
We shou'd respect, dearly belov'd,
Whate'er by breath of life is mov'd.
First, 'tis unjust; and, secondly,
'Tis cruel, and a cruelty
By which we are expos'd (O sad!)
To eat perhaps our lucky dad:
For ken, my friend, the saul ne'er dies,
But frae the failing body flies;
Leaves it to rot and seeks anither;
Thus young Miss Goose may be my mither;
The bloody wowf, seeking his prey,
His father in a sheep may slay;
And I, in worrying lambs or cocks,
Might choak my grandsire Doctor Fox.
Ah! heaven protect me frae sic crimes!
I'd rather die a thousand times."

Thus our bob-tail'd Pythagoras preach'd,
And with loud cant his lungs out-stretched.
His sermon sounded o'er the dale,
While thus he moraliz'd with zeal.
His glass spun out, he ceast, admir'd
By all who joyfully retir'd.

But after a' the lave was gane,
Some geese, twa chickens, and a hen,
Thought fit to stay a little space,
To tawk about some kittle case.
The doctor hem'd, and in he drew them,
Then quiet and decently he slew them;
On whom he fed the good auld way.
Those who wan aff, thrice happy they.

FABLE XXIII.

THE BEE AND THE FLY.

Before her hive, a paughty Bee
Observ'd a humble midding flie,
And proudly speer'd, what brought her there,
And with what front she durst repair
Amang the regents of the air.
"It sets you well," the Flie reply'd,
"To quarrel with sic saucy pride!
They're daft indeed has ought to do
With thrawin contentious fowk like you."—
"Why, scoundrel, you!" return'd the Bee,
What nation is sae wise as we?
Best laws and policy is ours,
And our repast the fragrant flow'rs:
No sordid nasty trade we drive,
But with sweet honey fill the hive;
Honey maist gratefu' to the taste,
On which the gods themselves may feast.
Out of my sight, vile wretch! whose tongue
Is daily slacking through the dung;
Vile spirits, filthily content
To feed on stinking excrement!"
The Flie replied in sober way,
"Faith we maun live as well's we may:
Glad poverty was ne'er a vice,
But sure ill-natur'd passion is.
Your honey's sweet; but then how tart
And bitter's your malicious heart!
In making laws you copy heaven,
But in your conduct how uneven!

To fash at ony time a fae,
Ye'll never stick ye'rsells to slae,
And skaith ye'rsell mair sickerly
Than e'er ye can your enemy.
At that rate, ane had better have
Less talents, if they can behave
Discreet, and less their passions' slave."

FABLE XXIV.

THE HORSE'S COMPLAINT.

"Ah! what a wretch'd unlucky corse
Am I!" cries a poor hireling horse:
"Toil'd a' the day quite aff my feet,
With little time or ought to eat:
By break of day, up frae my bed
Of dirt I'm rais'd to draw the sled,
Or cart, as haps to my wanluck,
To ca' in coals, or out the muck;
Or drest in saddle, howse, and bridle,
To gallop with some gamphrel idle,
That for his hiring pint and shilling,
Obliges me, tho' maist unwilling,
With whip, and spur sunk in my side,
O'er heights and hows all day to ride;
While he neglects my hungry wame,
Till aft I fa' and make him lame;
Who curses me shou'd ban himsell,
He starv'd me, I with faintness fell.
"How happy lives our baron's ape!
That's good for nought but girn and gape.

Or round about the lasses flee,
And lift their coats aboon their knee;
To frisk and jump frae stool to stool,
Turn up his bum, and play the fool;
Aft rives a mutch, or steals a spoon,
And burns the bairns' hose and shoon:
Yet while I'm starving in the stable,
This villain's cock'd upon the table,
There fed and rees'd by all around him,
By foolish chiels, the pox confound them!"
"My friend," says a dowse-headed ox,
"Our knight is e'en like other folks:
For 'tis not them who labour maist
That commonly are paid the best:
Then ne'er cast up what ye deserve,
Since better 'tis to please than serve."

TIT FOR TAT.

Be-south our channel, where 'tis common
To be priest-ridden man and woman;
A father anes, in grave procession,
Went to receive a wight's confession,
Whase sins, lang gather'd, now began
To burden sair his inner man.
But happy they that can with ease
Fling aff sic loads whene'er they please!
Lug out your sins, and eke your purses,
And soon your kind spiritual nurses
Will ease you of these heavy turses.
Cries Hodge, and sighs, "Ah! father ghostly,
I lang'd anes for some jewels costly,

And staw them frae a sneaking miser,
Wha was a wicked cheating squeezer,
And much had me and others wrang'd,
For which I aften wish'd him hang'd."—
The father says, "I own, my son,
To rob or pilfer is ill done;
But I can eith forgive the faut,
Since it is only tit for tat."

The sighing penitent gade furder,
And own'd his anes designing murder;
That he had lent anes guts a skreed,
Wha had gi'en him a broken head.
Replies the priest, "My son, 'tis plain
That's only tit for tat again."

But still the sinner sighs and sobs,
And cries, "Ah! these are venial jobs,
"To the black crime that yet behind
Lies like auld nick upon my mind:
I dare na name't; I'd lure be strung
Up by the neck, or by the tongue,
As speak it out to you: believe me,
The faut you never wad forgive me."
The haly man, with pious care,
Intreated, pray'd, and spake him fair;
Conjur'd him, as he hop'd for heaven,
To tell his crime, and be forgiven.

"Well then," says Hodge, "if it maun be,
Prepare to hear a tale frae me,
That when 'tis tald, I'm unko feard,
Ye'll wish it never had been heard:
Ah me! your reverence's sister,
Ten times I carnally have—kist her."
"All's fair," returns the reverend brother,
I've done the samen with your mother

Three times as aft; and sae for that
We're on a level, tit for tat."

THE PARROT.

An honest man had tint his wife,
And, wearied of a dowie life,
Thought a parroquet bade maist fair,
With tatling to divert his care:
For the good woman sair he griev'd;
He 'ad needed nane if she had liv'd!
Streight to a birdman's shop he hies,
Who, stock'd with all that wing the skies,
And give delight with feathers fair,
Or please with a melodious air;
Larks, gowdspinks, mavises, and linties,
Baith hame bred, and frae foreign countries;
Of parrots he had curious choice,
Carefully bred to make a noise;
The very warst had learn'd his tale,
To ask a cup of sack or ale;
Cry westlin herrings, or fresh salmons,
White sand, or Norway nuts like almonds.
Delighted with their various claver,
While wealth made all his wits to waver,
"He cast his look beneath the board,
Where stood ane that spake ne'er a word:
"Pray what art thou stands speechless there?"
Reply'd the bird, "I think the mair."
The buyer says, "Thy answer's wise,
And thee I'll have at any price.

What must you have?"—"Five pounds."—"'Tis thine
The money, and the bird is mine."
Now in his room this feather'd sage
Is hung up in a gilded cage,
The master's expectations fully
Possest to hear him tauk like Tully:
But a hale month is past and gane,
He never hears a rhyme but ane;
Still in his lugs he hears it rair,
"The less I speak I think the mair."—
"Confound ye for a silly sot,
What a dull idiot have I got!
As dull mysell, on short acquaintance,
To judge of ane by a single sentence!"

THE ECLIPSE.

Upon his gilded chariot, led by hours,
With radiant glories darting through the air,
The Sun, high sprung in his diurnal course,
Shed down a day serenely sweet and fair.
The earth mair beautiful and fertile grew;
The flow'ry fields in rich array,
Smil'd lovely on the beamy day,
Delightful for the eye to view;
Cerus, with her golden hair,
Displaying treasure ilka where,
While useful plenty made her stalks to bow.

A thousand little suns glanc'd on the wave;
Nature appear'd to claim the Sun's respect,
All did sae blyth and beauteously behave.
"Ah!" cry'd the Moon, "too much for him ye deck;

My aking een cannot this glory bear;
This Sun pretends nane in the sky
Can shine but him, then where am I?
Soon I the contrary shall clear:
By ae bauld strake,
With him I'll make
My equal empire in the heaven appear.

'Tis I that gives a lustre to the night,
Then should not I my proper right display,
And now, even now dart down my silver light?
I give enough, this Sun gives too much day."
The project fram'd, pale Cynthia now to shaw
Her shining power, right daftly run
Directly 'tween the earth and Sun.
Unwise design! the world then saw
Instead of light, the Moon
Brought darkness in at noon,
And without borrowing had no light at a'.

Thus many empty and imprudent men,
Wha to their ain infirmities are blind,
Rax yont their reach, and this way let us ken
A jealous, weak, and insufficient mind.

THE MONK AND THE MILLER'S WIFE.(1)

Now lend your lugs, ye benders fine,
Wha ken the benefit of wine;
And you wha laughing scud brown ale,
Leave jinks a wee, and hear a tale.

(1) [* See Remarks, vol. i. p. 158.]

An honest miller won'd in Fife,
That had a young and wanton wife,
Wha sometimes thol'd the parish priest
To mak' her man a twa-horn'd beast.
He paid right mony visits till her,
And to keep in with Hab the miller,
He endeavour'd aft to mak' him happy,
Where'er he ken'd the ale was nappy.
Sic condescension in a pastor,
Knit Halbert's love to him the faster;
And by his converse, troth 'tis true,
Hab learn'd to preach when he was fou.
Thus all the three were wonder pleas'd,
The wife well serv'd, the man well eas'd.
This ground his corns, and that did cherish
Himself with dining round the parish.
Bess, the good wife, thought it nae skaith,
Since she was fit to serve them baith.

When equal is the night and day,
And Cerus gives the schools the play,
A youth sprung frae a gentler pater,
Bred at Saint Andrew's alma mater,
Ae day gawn hameward, it fell late,
And him benighted by the gate.
To lye without, pit-mirk, did shore him,
He coudna see his thumb before him;
But clack, clack, clack, he heard a mill,
Whilk led him by the lugs theretill.
To tak' the threed of tale alang,
This mill to Halbert did belang;
Not less this note your notice claims,
The scholar's name was Master James.

Now, smiling muse, the prelude past,
Smoothly relate a tale shall last

As lang as Alps and Grampian hills,
As lang as wind or water mills.
In enter'd James, Hab saw and ken'd him,
And offer'd kindly to befriend him
With sic good cheer as he cou'd make,
Baith for his ain and father's sake.
The scholar thought himself right sped,
And gave him thanks in terms well bred.
Quoth Hab, "I canna leave my mill
As yet; but step ye west the kill
A bow-shot, and ye'll find my hame;
Gae warm ye, and crack with our dame,
Till I set aff the mill, syne we
Shall tak' what Bessy has to gi'e."
James, in return, what's handsome said,
O'er lang to tell, and aff he gade.
Out of the house some light did shine,
Which led him till 't as with a line:
Arriv'd, he knock'd, for doors were steekit;
Straight through a window Bessy keekit,
And cries, "Wha's that gi'es fowk a fright
At sic untimous time of night?"
James, with good humour, maist discreetly
Tald her his circumstance completely.
"I dinna ken ye," quoth the wife,
And up and down the thieves are rife;
Within my lane, I'm but a woman,
Sae I'll unbar my door to nae man:
But since 'tis very like, my dow,
That all ye're telling may be true,
Hae, there's a key, gang in your way
At the neist door, there's braw ait strae;
Streek down upon't, my lad, and learn
They're no ill lodg'd that get a barn."

Thus, after meikle clitter clatter,
James fand he co'udna mend the matter;
And since it might nae better be,
With resignation took the key;
Unlockt the barn, clam up the mow,
Where was an opening near the hou,
Throw whilk he saw a glent of light,
That gave diversion to his sight:
By this he quickly cou'd discern,
A thin wa' sep'rate house and barn;
And through this rive was in the wa',
All done within the house he saw:
He saw what ought not to be seen,
And scarce gave credit to his een,
The parish priest, of reverend fame,
In active courtship with the dame!
To lengthen out description here
Wou'd but offend the modest ear,
And beet the lewder youthfu' flame
That we by satire strive to tame.
Suppose the wicked action o'er,
And James continuing still to glowr;
Wha saw the wife as fast as able
Spread a clean servite on the table,
And syne, frae the ha' ingle, bring ben
A piping het young roasted hen,
And twa good bottles stout and clear,
Ane of strong ale, and ane of beer.
But, wicked luck! just as the priest
Shot in his fork in chucky's breast,
Th' unwelcome miller ga'e a roar,
Cry'd, "Bessy, haste ye ope the door."
With that the haly letcher fled,
And darn'd himsell behind a bed;

While Bessy huddled a' things by,
That nought the cuckold might espy;
Syne loot him in; but out of tune,
Speer'd why he left the mill sae soon?
"I come," said he, "as manners claims,
To crack and wait on Master James,
Whilk I shou'd do tho' ne'er so bissy;
I sent him here, good wife, where is he?"—
"Ye sent him here!" quoth Bessy, grumbling;
"Ken'd I this James? a chiel came rumbling,
But how was I assur'd, when dark,
That he had been nae thievish spark,
Or some rude wencher gotten a dose,
That a good wife could ill oppose?"—
"And what came of him? speak nae langer;"
Cries Halbert, in a Highland anger.
"I sent him to the barn," quoth she:
"Gae quickly bring him in," quoth he.
James was brought in; the wife was bawked;
The priest stood close; the miller cracked:
Then ask'd his sunkan gloomy spouse,
What supper she had in the house,
That might be suitable to gi'e
Ane of their lodger's qualitie?
Quoth she, "Ye may well ken, goodman,
Your feast comes frae the pottage-pan;
The stov'd or roasted we afford
Are aft great strangers on our board."—
"Pottage," quoth Hab, "ye senseless tawpie!
Think ye this youth's a gilly-gawpy;
And that his gentle stamock's master,
To worry up a pint of plaister,
Like our mill-knaves that lift the lading,
Whase kytes can streek out like raw plaiding?

Swith roast a hen, or fry some chickens,
And send for ale frae Maggy Picken's."—
"Hout I," quoth she, "Ye may well ken,
'Tis ill brought but that's no there ben;
When but last owk, nae farder gane,
The laird got a' to pay his kain."

Then James, wha had as good a guess
Of what was in the house as Bess,
With pawky smile this plea to end,
To please himsell and ease his friend,
First open'd, with a slee oration,
His wondrous skill in conjuration:
Said he, "By this fell art I'm able
To whoop aff any great man's table
Whate'er I like to make a meal of,
Either in part, or yet the hail of;
And, if ye please, I'll shaw my art."
Cries Halbert, "Faith, with all my heart."
Bess sain'd herself, cry'd, "Lord, be here!"
And near-hand fell a-swoon for fear.
James leugh, and bade her naithing dread;
Syne to his conjuring went with speed:
And first he draws a circle round,
Then utters mony a magic sound
Of words, part Latin, Greek, and Dutch,
Enow to fright a very witch.
That done, he says, "Now, now, 'tis come,
And in the boal beside the lum:
Now set the board, good wife, gae ben,
Bring frae yon boal a roasted hen."
She wadna gang, but Habby ventur'd;
And soon as he the aimbrie enter'd,
It smell'd sae well he short time sought it,
And, wond'ring, 'tween his hands he brought it,

He view'd it round, and thrice he smell'd it,
Syne with a gentle touch he felt it.
Thus ilka sense he did conveen,
Lest glamour had beguiled his een:
They all in ane united body,
Declar'd it a fine fat how towdy.
"Nae mair about it," quoth the miller,
"The fowl looks well, and we'll fa' till her."
"Sae be't," says James; and in a doup,
They snapt her up baith stoup and roup.
"Neist, O!" cries Halbert, "cou'd your skill
But help us to a waught of ale,
I'd be oblig'd t' ye a' my life,
And offer to the deel my wife,
To see if he'll discreeter mak' her,
But that I'm fleed he winna tak' her."
Said James, "Ye offer very fair;
The bargain's hadden, sae nae mair."
Then thrice he shook a willow wand,
With kittle words thrice gave command;
That done, with look baith learn'd and grave,
Said, "Now ye'll get what ye wad have:
Twa bottles of as nappy liquor
As ever ream'd in horn or bicquer,
Behind the ark that hads your meal
Ye'll find twa standing corkit weel."
He said, and fast the miller flew,
And frae their nest the bottles drew:
Then first, the scholar's health he toasted,
Whase art had gart him feed on roasted;
His father's neist, and a' the rest
Of his good friends that wish'd him best,
Which were o'er langsome at the time
In a short tale to put in rhyme.

Thus while the miller and the youth
Were blythly slocking of their drowth,
Bess fretting, scarcely held frae greeting,
The priest enclos'd stood vex'd and sweating.
"O wow!" said Hab, "if ane might speer,
Dear Master James, wha brought our cheer;
Sic laits appear to us sae awfu',
We hardly think your learning lawfu'."
"To bring your doubts to a conclusion,"
Says James, "ken I'm a Rosicrucian,
Ane of the set that never carries
On traffic with black deels or fairies;
There's mony a spirit that's no deel
That constantly around us wheel.
There was a sage call'd Albumazor,
Whase wit was gleg as ony razor;
Frae this great man we learn'd the skill
To bring these gentry to our will;
And they appear, when we've a mind,
In ony shape of human kind:
Now if you'll drap your foolish fear,
I'll gar my Pacolet appear."
Hab fidg'd and leugh, his elbuck clew,
Baith fear'd and fond a sp'rit to view:
At last his courage wan the day,
He to the scholar's will gave way.
Bessy by this began to smell
A rat, but kept her mind to 'rsell:
She pray'd like howdy in her drink,
But meantime tipt young James a wink.
James frae his e'e an answer sent,
Which made the wife right well content;
Then turn'd to Hab, and thus advised:
"Whate'er you see be nought surprised;

But for your saul move not your tongue;
And ready stand with a great rung,
Syne as the sp'rit gangs marching out,
Be sure to lend him a sound rout:
I bidna this by way of mocking,
For nought delights him mair than knocking."
Hab got a kent, stood by the hallan,
And straight the wild mischievous callan
Cries, "Rhadamanthus husky mingo,
Monk, horner, hipock, jinko, jingo,
Appear in likeness of a priest;
No like a deel, in shape of beast,
With gaping shafts to fleg us a';
Wauk forth, the door stands to the wa'."
Then, frae the hole where he was pent,
The priest approach'd, right well content;
With silent pace strade o'er the floor,
Till he was drawing near the door,
Then, to escape the cudgel, ran;
But was not miss'd by the good-man,
Wha lent him on his neck a lounder,
That gart him o'er the threshold founder.
Darkness soon hid him frae their sight;
Ben flew the miller in a fright;
"I trow," quoth he, "I laid well on;
But wow! he's like our ain Mess John."

THE DAFT BARGAIN.

At market anes, I watna how,
Twa herds between them coft a cow:

Driving her hame the needfu' hacky,
But ceremony, chanc'd to k—y.
Quoth Rab right ravingly to Raff,
" Gin ye'll eat that digested draff
Of Crummy, I shall quat my part."—
" A bargain be't with a' my heart,"
Raff soon reply'd, and lick'd his thumb,
To gorgle 't up without a gloom:
Syne till't he fell, and seem'd right yap
His mealtith quickly up to gawp.
Haff done, his heart began to scunner,
But lootna on till Rab strak under;
Wha fearing skair of cow to tine,
At his daft bargain did repine.
" Well, well," quoth Raff, " tho' ye was rash,
I'll scorn to wrang ye, senseless hash!
Come fa' to work as I ha'e done,
And eat the ither haff as soon,
Ye's save ye'r part."—" Content," quoth Rab,
And slerg'd the rest o't in his gab.
Now what was tint, or what was won,
Is eithly seen; my story's done:
Yet frae this tale confed'rate states may learn
To save their cow, and yet no eat her sharn.

THE TWA CUT-PURSES.

In borrows-town there was a fair,
And mony a landart coof was there;
Baith lads and lasses busked brawly,
To glowr at ilka bonny waly,
And lay out ony ora-bodles
On sma' gimcracks that pleas'd their noddles,

Sic as a joctaleg, or sheers,
Confeckit ginger, plums, or pears.
These gaping gowks twa rogues survey,
And on their cash this plot they lay:
The tane, less like a knave than fool,
Unbidden clam the high cockstool,
And pat his head and baith his hands
Through holes where the ill-doer stands.
Now a' the crowd with mouth and een
Cry'd out, "What does this ideot mean?"
They glowr'd and leugh, and gather'd thick,
And never thought upon a trick,
Till he beneath had done his job,
By tooming poutches of the mob;
Wha now possest of routh of gear,
Scour'd aff as lang's the coast was clear.
But wow! the ferly quickly chang'd,
When through their empty fobs they rang'd:
Some girn'd, and some look'd blae wi' grief;
While some cry'd out, "Fy! had the thief."
But ne'er a thief or thief was there,
Or cou'd be found in a' the fair.
The jip, wha stood aboon them a',
His innocence began to shaw;
Said he, "My friends, I'm very sorry
To hear your melancholy story;
But sure where'er your tinsel be,
Ye canna lay the wyte on me."

THE LURE.

The sun just o'er the hills was peeping,
The hynds arising, gentry sleeping,

The dogs were barking, cocks were crawing,
Night-drinking sots counting their lawin;
Clean were the roads, and clear the day
When forth a falconer took his way,
Nane with him but his she knight-errant,
That acts in air the bloody tyrant;
While with quick wing, fierce beak, and claws,
She breaks divine and human laws;
Ne'er pleas'd but with the hearts and livers
Of peartricks, teals, moor-powts, and plivers:
Yet is she much esteem'd and dandl'd,
Clean lodg'd, well fed, and saftly handl'd.
Reason for this need be nae wonder,
Her parasites share in the plunder.
Thus sneaking rooks about a court,
That make oppression but their sport,
Will praise a paughty bloody king,
And hire mean hackney poets to sing
His glories; while the deel be licket
He e'er attempt but what he sticket.

So, Sir, as I was gawn to say,
This falconer had tane his way
O'er Calder-moor; and gawn the moss up,
He there forgather'd with a gossip:
And wha was't, trow ye, but the deel
That had disguis'd himsell sae weel
In human shape, sae snug and wylie,
Jude took him for a burlie bailie:
His cloven cloots were hid with shoon,
A bonnet coor'd his horns aboon:
Nor spat he fire, or brimstone rifted,
Nor awsome glowr'd; but cawmly lifted
His e'en and voice, and thus began:
"Good morning t' ye, honest man;

Ye're early out; how far gae ye
This gate?—I'm blyth of company.
What fowl is that, may ane demand,
That stands sae trigly on your hand?"—
"Wow! man," quoth Juden, "where won ye?
The like was never speer'd at me!
Man, 'tis a hawk, and e'en as good
As ever flew, or wore a hood."—
"Friend, I'm a stranger," quoth auld Symmie,
"I hope ye'll no be angry wi' me;
The ignorant maun ay be speering
Questions till they come to a clearing.
Then tell me mair: "What do ye wi't?
Is't good to sing or good to eat?"
"For neither," answer'd simple Juden;
"But helps to bring my lord his food in:
When fowls start up that I wad hae,
Straight frae my hand I let her gae;
Her hood tane aff, she is not langsome
In taking captives, which I ransome
With a dow's wing, or chicken's leg."—
"Trowth," quoth the deel, "that's nice, I beg
Ye'll be sae kind as let me see
How this same bird of yours can flee."
"T' oblige ye, friend, I winna stand."
Syne loos'd the falcon frae his hand.
Unhooded, up she sprang with birr,
While baith stood staring after her.
"But how d' ye get her back?" said Nick.
"For that," quoth Jude, "I have a trick:
Ye see this Lure, it shall command
Her upon sight down to my hand."
Syne twirl'd it thrice, with whieu, whieu, whieu,
And straight upon't the falcon flew.

"As I'm a sinner," cries the deel,
"I like this pastime wonder weel;
And since ye've been sae kindly free
To let her at my bidding flee,
I'll entertain ye in my gate."
Meantime it was the will of fate,
A hooded friar (ane of that clan
Ye have descriv'd by Father Gawin,(1)
In "Master-Keys") came up, good saul!
Him Satan cleek'd up by the spaul,
Whip'd aff his hood, and without mair,
Ga'e him a toss up in the air:
High flew the son of Saint Loyola,
While startled Juden gave a hola!
Bombaz'd with wonder, still he stood,
The ferly had maist curdled his blood,
To see a monk mount like a facon!
He gan to doubt if he was wakin:
Thrice did he rub his een to clear,
And having master'd part o's fear,
"His presence be about us a'!"
He cries, "the like I never saw:
See, see! he like a lavrock tours;
He'll reach the starns in twa 'r three hours!
Is't possible to bring him back?"
"For that," quoth Nick, "I have a knack:
To train my birds I want na Lures,
Can manage them as ye do yours:
And there's ane coming hie gate hither
Shall soon bring down the haly brither."

(1) The Reverend Anthony Gawin, formerly a Spanish Roman Catholic priest, now an Irish Protestant minister; who hath lately wrote three volumes on the tricks and whoredoms of the priests and nuns; which book he names "Master-Keys to Popery."

This was a fresh young landart lass,
With cheeks like cherries, een like glass;
Few coats she wore, and they were kilted,
And "John come kiss me now" she lilted,
As she skift o'er the benty knows,
Gawn to the bught to milk the ewes:
Her in his hand slee Belzie hint up,
As eith as ye wad do a pint-stoup,
Inverted, wav'd her round his head;
Whieu, whieu, he whistled, and with speed,
Down, quick as shooting starns, the priest
Came souse upon the lass's breast.

The moral of this tale shows plainly,
That carnal minds attempt but vainly
Aboon this laigher warld to mount,
While slaves to Satan.———

THE THREE BONNETS:

A TALE.

IN FOUR CANTOS.

1722.

THE PERSONS.

DUNIWHISTLE, father to Joukum, Bristle, and Bawsy.
JOUKUM, in love with Rosie.
BRISTLE, a man of resolution.
BAWSY, a weaker brother.
BARD, a narrator.
BEEF, porter to Rosie.
GHAIST, the ghost of Duniwhistle.
ROSIE, an heiress.

CANTO I.

BARD.

When men o' mettle thought it nonsense
To heed that clepping thing ca'd conscience,
And by free thinking had the knack
O' jeering ilka word it spak',
And, as a learned author speaks,
Employ'd it like a pair o' breeks,
To hide their lewd and nasty sluices,
Whilk eith slipt down for baith these uses:
Then Duniwhistle, worn wi' years,
And gawn the gate o' his forbears,
Commanded his three sons to come,
And wait upon him in his room:
Bade Bristle steek the door; an' syne
He thus began:—

DUNIWHISTLE.

Dear bairns o' mine,
I quickly maun submit to fate,
And leave you three a good estate,
Which has been honourably won,
An' handed down frae sire to son,
But clag or claim, for ages past:
Now, that I mayna prove the last,
Here's three permission bonnets for ye,
Which your great gutchers wore before ye;
An' if ye'd hae nae man betray ye,
Let naething ever wile them frae ye;

But keep the bonnets on your heads,
An' hands frae signing foolish deeds,
An' ye shall never want sic things,
Shall gar ye be made o' by kings:
But if ye ever wi' them part,
Fu' sair ye'll for your folly smart:
Bare-headed then ye'll look like snools,
And dwindle down to silly tools.
Haud up your hands now, swear an' say,
As ye shall answer on a day,
Ye'll faithfully observe my will,
An' a' its premises fulfil.

BRISTLE.

My worthy father, I shall strive
To keep your name an' fame alive,
An' never shaw a saul that's dastard,
To gar fowk tak' me for a bastard:
If e'er by me ye're disobey'd,
May witches nightly on me ride.

JOUKUM.

Whae'er shall dare, by force or guile,
This bonnet aff my head to wile,
For sic a bauld attempt shall rue,
And ken I was begot by you:
Else may I like a gipsy wander,
Or for my daily bread turn pander.

BAWSY.

May I be jyb'd by great an' sma',
And kytch'd like ony tennis-ba,

Be the disgrace o' a' my kin,
If e'er I wi' my bonnet twin.

BARD.

Now, soon as each had gi'en his aith,
The auld man yielded up his breath;
Was row'd in linen white as snaw,
And to his fathers borne awa'.
But scarcely he in moss was rotten,
Before his test'ment was forgotten,
As ye shall hear frae future sonnet,
How Joukum sinder'd wi' his bonnet;
And bought frae senseless billy Bawsy,
His, to propine a giglet lassie;
While worthy Bristle, not sae donner'd,
Preserves his bonnet, and is honour'd.
Thus Caractacus did behave,
Tho' by the fate o' war a slave;
His body only, for his mind
No Roman pow'r cou'd break or bind:
Wi' bannet on he bauldly spak;
His greatness gart his fetters crack:
The victor did his friendship claim,
And sent him wi' new glories hame.
But leave we Briss and simile,
And to our tale wi' ardour flee.
Beyond the hills where lang the billies
Had bred up queys, and kids, and fillies,
And foughten mony a bloody battle
Wi' thieves that came to lift their cattle;
There liv'd a lass kept rary shows
And fiddlers ay about her house;
Wha at her table fed and ranted,
Wi' the stout ale she never wanted:

She was a winsome wench and wally,
And cou'd put on her claes fu' brawly;
Rumble to ilka market-town,
And drink and fight like a dragoon:
Just sic like her wha far aff wander'd,
To get hersell weil Alexander'd.
Rosie had word o' meikle siller,
Whilk brought a hantle o' wooers till her.
Amang the rest, young master Jouk
She conquer'd ae day wi' a look.
Frae that time forth he ne'er cou'd stay
At hame to mind his corn or hay,
But grew a beau, and did adorn
Himsell wi' fifty bows o' corn;
Forby what he took on to rig
Him out wi' linen, shoon, and wig,
Snuff-boxes, sword-knots, canes and washes,
And sweeties to bestow on lasses;
Cou'd newest aiths genteelly swear,
And had a course o' flaws perquire:
He drank and danc'd, and sigh'd to move
Fair Rosie to accept his love.
After dumb signs, he thus began,
And spak' his mind to 'er like a man.

JOUKUM.

O tak' me, Rosie, to your arms,
And let me revel o'er your charms;
If ye sae na, I needna care
For raips or tethers made o' hair,
Penknives or pools I winna need;
That minute ye say na, I'm dead.
O let me lie within your breast,
And at your dainty teazle feast;

Weil do I like your goud to finger,
And fit to her your st—— singer,
While on this sun side o' the brae
Belangs to you, my limbs I'll lay.

ROSIE.

I own, sweet Sir, ye woo me frankly,
But a' your courtship sars sae rankly
O' selfish interest, that I'm flead
My person least employs your head.

JOUKUM.

What a distinction's this your making,
When your poor lover's heart is breaking!
Wi' little logic I can shew
That every thing you ha'e is you:
Besides the beauties o' your person,
These beds o' flowers you set your a—e on,
Your claiths, your lands, and lying pelf,
Are every ane your very self,
And add fresh lustre to these graces
Wi' which adorn'd your saul and face is.

ROSIE.

Ye seem to ha'e a loving flame
For me, and hate your native hame;
That gars me ergh to trust you meikle,
For fear you shou'd prove false and fickle.

JOUKUM.

In troth my rugged billy Bristle
About his gentrie mak's sic fistle,

That if a body contradict him,
He's ready wi' a durk to stick him;
That wearies me o' hame, I vow,
And fain wou'd live and die wi' you.

BARD.

Observing Jouk a wee tate tipsy,
Smirking reply'd the pawky gipsy.

ROSIE.

I wad be very wae to see
My lover tak' the pet and die;
Wherefore I'm inclin'd to ease ye,
And do what in me lies to please ye;
But first, ere we conclude the paction,
You must perform some gallant action,
To prove the truth o' what you've said,
Else, for you, I shall die a maid.

JOUKUM.

My dearest jewel, gi'e 't a name,
That I may win baith you and fame;
Shall I gae fight wi' forest bulls?
Or cleave down troops wi' thicker sculls?
Or shall I douk the deepest sea,
And coral pou for beads to thee?
Penty the pope upon the nose?
Or p— upon a hundred beaus?

ROSIE.

In troth, dear lad, I wad be laith
To risk your life, or do ye skaith;

Only employ your canny skill
To gain and rive your father's will,
Wi' the consent o' Briss and Bawsy,
And I shall in my bosom hawse ye,
Soon as the fatal bonnets three
Are ta'en frae them and gi'en to me.

JOUKUM.

Which to preserve I gied my aith.
But now the cause is life and death:
I must, or wi' the bonnet part,
Or twin wi' you and break my heart:
Sae though the aith we took was awfu',
To keep it now appears unlawfu'.
Then, love, I'll answer thy demands,
And flee to fetch them to your hands.

BARD.

The famous jilt o' Palestine
Thus drew the hoods o'er Sampson's een,
And gart him tell where lay his strength,
O' which she twinn'd him at the length;
Then gied him up in chains to rave,
And labour like a galley slave:
But, Rosie, mind, when growing hair
His loss of pith 'gan to repair,
He made of thousands an example,
By crushing them beneath their temple.

CANTO II.

BARD.

The supper sowin-cogs and bannocks
Stood cooling on the sole o' winnocks,
And, cracking at the westlin gavels,
The wives sat beeking o' their navels,
When Jouk his brither Bristle found,
Fetching his ev'ning wauk around
A score o' ploughmen o' his ain,
Wha blythly whistled on the plain.
Jouk three times congee'd, Bristle anes,
Then shook his hand, and thus begins:

BRISTLE.

Wow! brither Jouk, where ha'e ye been?
I scarce can trow my looking een,
Ye're grown sae braw: now weirds defend me!
Gin that I had nae maist miskend ye.
And where gat ye that braw blue stringing,
That's at your houghs and shuthers hinging;
Ye look as sprush as ane that's wooing;
I ferly, lad, what ye've been doing.

JOUKUM.

My very much respected brither,
Should we hide ought frae ane anither,
And not, when warm'd wi' the same blood,
Consult ilk ane anither's good?
And be it ken'd t' ye, my design
Will profit prove to me and mine.

BRISTLE.

And, brither, troth it much commends
Your virtue, thus to love your friends;
It makes me blyth, for aft I said,
Ye were a clever mettled lad.

JOUKUM.

And sae, I hope, will ever prove,
Gif ye befriend me in my love:
For Rosie, bonny, rich, and gay,
And sweet as flow'rs in June or May,
Her gear I'll get, her sweets I'll rifle,
Gif ye'll but yield me up a trifle;
Promise to do't, and ye'se be free
Wi' ony thing pertains to me.

BRISTLE.

I lang to answer your demand,
And never shall for trifles stand.

JOUKUM.

Then she desires, as a propine,
These bonnets, Bawsy's, yours, and mine;
And well I wat that's nae great matter,
Gif I sae easily can get her.

BRISTLE.

Ha, ha! ye Judas, are ye there?
The d— then nor she ne'er get mair.
Is that the trifle that ye spoke o'?
Wha think ye, Sir, ye mak' a mock o'?

Ye silly mansworn, scant o' grace!
Swith let me never see your face.
Seek my auld bonnet aff my head!
Faith that's a bonny ane indeed!
Require a thing I'll part wi' never!
She's get as soon a lap o' my liver:
Vile whore and jade! the woody hang her.

BARD.

Thus said, he said nae mair for anger,
But curs'd and ban'd, and was nae far
Frae treading Jouk amang the glar.
While Jouk, wi' language glibe as oolie,
Right pawkily kept aff a toolie.
Weil masked wi' a wedder's skin,
Although he was a tod within,
He hum'd and ha'd, and wi' a cant,
Held forth as he had been a saint,
And quoted texts to prove we'd better
Part wi' a sma' thing for a greater.

JOUKUM.

Ah! brither, may the furies rack me
Gif I mean ill! but ye mistak' me:
But gin your bonnet's sic a jewel,
Pray gi'e 't or keep 't, Sir, as you will;
Since your auld-fashion'd fancy rather
Inclines till 't than a hat and feather:
But I'll go try my brither Bawsy,
Poor man, he's nae sae daft and sawcy,
Wi' empty pride to crook his mou',
And hinder his ain gude, like you.

Gif he and I agree, ne'er doubt ye,
We'll mak' the bargain up without ye;
Syne your braw bonnet and your noddle
Will hardly baith be worth a bodle.

BARD.

At this bauld Bristle's colour chang'd,
He swore on Rose to be reveng'd;
For he began now to be flied,
She'd wile the honours frae his head;
Syne wi' a stern and canker'd look,
He thus reprov'd his brither Jouk.

BRISTLE.

Thou vile disgrace o' our forbeirs!
Wha lang wi' valiant dint o' weirs,
Maintain'd their right 'gainst a' intrusions
O' our auld faes the Rosycrucians,
Dost thou design at last to catch
Us in a girn wi' this base match,
And for the hauding up thy pride,
Upo' thy brithers' riggins ride?
I'll see you hang'd, and her thegither,
As high as Haman, in a tether,
Ere I wi' my ain bonnet quat,
For ony borrow'd beaver hat,
Whilk I as Rosie taks the fykes,
Maun wear or no just as she likes,
Then let me hear nae mair about her,
For if ye dare again to mutter
Sic vile proposals in my hearing,
Ye needna trust to my forbearing;

For soon my beard will tak' a low,
And I shall crack your crazy pow.

BARD.

This said, brave Bristle said nae mair,
But cock'd his bonnet wi' an air,
Wheel'd round wi' gloomy brows and muddy,
And left his brother in a study.

CANTO III.

BARD.

Now Sol wi' his lang whip gae cracks
Upon his neighering coursers' backs,
To gar them tak' th' Olympian brae,
Wi' a cart lade o' bleezing day;
The country hind ceases to snore,
Bangs frae his bed, unlocks the dore,
His bladder tooms, and gi'es a rift,
Then tentily surveys the lift;
And weary o' his wife and flaes,
To their embrace prefers his claes.
Scarce had the lark forsook her nest,
Whan Jouk, wha had got little rest,
For thinking o' his plot and lassie,
Got up to gang and deal wi' Bawsie.
Awa fast o'er the bent he gade,
And fand him dozing on his bed,
His blankets crieshy, foul his sark,
His curtains trim'd wi' spider's wark;

Soot-draps hang frae his roof and kipples,
His floor was a' tobacco spittles:
Yet on the antlers o' a deer
Hang mony an auld claymore and spear,
Wi' coat o' iron and target trusty,
Inch thick o' dirt, and unco rusty:
Enough appear'd to shaw his billy,
That he was lazy, poor, and silly,
And wadna mak' so great a bustle
About his bonnet as did Bristle.
Jouk three times rugged at his shoulder,
Cried three times laigh, and three times louder:
At langrun Bawsy raik'd his een,
And cries, "What's that? what d' ye mean?"
Then looking up, he sees his brither.

BAWSY.

Good morrow, Jouk, what brings you hither?
You're early up, as I'm a sinner
I seenly rise before my dinner.
Weil, what's ye'r news, and how gaes a'?
Ye've been an unco time awa'.

JOUKUM.

Bawsy, I'm blyth to see you weil,
For me, thank God, I keep my heal:
Get up, get up, ye lazy mart,
I hae a secret to impart,
O' which when I gi'e you an inkling,
It will set baith your lugs a tinkling.

BARD.

Straight Bawsy rises, quickly dresses,
While haste his youky mind expresses:
Now rigg'd, and morning drink brought in,
Thus did slee-gabbet Jouk begin.

JOUKUM.

My worthy brither, weil I wate
O'er feckless is your wee estate
For sic a meikle saul as yours,
That to things greater higher tow'rs;
But ye lie loitering here at hame,
Neglectfu' baith o' wealth and fame,
Tho', as I said, ye ha'e a mind
That is for higher things design'd.

BAWSY.

That's very true, thanks to the skies,
But how to get them, there it lies.

JOUKUM.

I'll tell ye, Bawse, I've laid a plot,
That only wants your casting vote,
And if you'll gi'e 't, your bread is baken;
But first accept o' this love-taiken:
Here tak' this gowd, and never want
Enough to gar you drink and rant;
And this is but an arle-penny
To what I afterward design ye;
And in return, I'm sure that I
Shall naething seek that ye'll deny.

BAWSY.

And trouth now, Jouk, and neither will I,
Or after never ca' me billy;
If I refuse, wae light upo' me.
This gowd, O wow! 'tis wonder bonny.

JOUKUM.

Ay, that it is; 'tis e'en the a'
That gars the plough o' living draw:
'Tis gowd gars sogers fight the fiercer;
Without it preaching wad be scarcer;
'Tis gowd that maks some great men witty;
And puggy lasses fair and pretty;
Without it ladies nice wad dwindle
Down to a wife that snooves a spindle.—
But to the point, and wave digression:
I mak' a free and plain confession,
That I'm in love; and, as I said,
Demand frae you a little aid
To gain a bride, that eithly can
Mak' me fu' blest and you a man:
Gi'e me your bonnet to present
My mistress wi', and your consent
To rive the daft auld fashion'd deed
That bids ye wear it on your head.

BAWSY.

O gosh! O gosh! then, Jouk, ha'e at her;
If that be a', 'tis nae great matter.

JOUKUM.

These granted, she demands nae mair,
To let us in her riches skair;
Nor shall our hirds, as heretofore,
Rin aff wi' ane anither's store,
Nor ding out ane anither's harns,
When they forgather 'mang the kairns;
But freely may drive up and down,
And sell in ilka market-town
Belangs to her, which soon ye'll see,
If ye be wise, belang to me:
And when that happy day shall come,
My honest Bawsy, there's my thumb,
That while I breathe I'll ne'er beguile ye,
Ye'se baith get gowd, and be a bailly.

BAWSY.

Faith, Jouk, I see but little skaith
In breaking o' a senseless aith,
That is impos'd by doited dads,
To please their whims, on thoughtless lads.
My bonnet! welcome to my bonnet,
And meikle good may ye mak' on it.
Our father's will, I'se mak' nae din,
Tho' Rosie should apply't behin'.
But say, does billy Bristle ken
This your design to mak' us men?

JOUKUM.

Ay, that he does; but the stiff ass
Bears a hard hatred at the lass,

And rattles out a hantla stories
O' blood, and dirt, and ancient glories;
Meaning foul feuds that us'd to be
Between ours and her family:
Bans like a blockhead that he'll ne'er
Twin wi' his bonnet for a' her gear;
But you and I conjoin'd can ding him,
And, by a vote, to reason bring him:
If we stand closs, 'tis unco eith
To rive the test'ment spite o's teeth,
And gar him ply, for a' his clavers,
To lift his bonnet to our beavers.

BAWSY.

Then let the doof delight in drudging;
What cause ha'e we to tent his grudging,
Tho' Rosie's flocks feed on his fells,
If you and I be weil oursells?

BARD.

Thus Jouk and Bawsy were agreed,
And Briss maun yield, it was decreed.—
Thus far I've sung, in Highland strains,
O' Jouk's amours, and pawky pains,
To gain his ends wi' ilka brither,
Sae opposite to ane anither;
O' Bristle's hardy resolutions,
And hatred to the Rosicrucians;
O' Bawsy put in slav'ry neck-fast.
Selling his bonnet for a breakfast.
What follows on't, o' gain or skaith,
I'se tell when we ha'e ta'en our breath.

CANTO IV.

BARD.

Now soon as e'er the will was torn,
Jouk, wi' twa bonnets, on the morn,
Frae Fairyland fast bang'd away,
The prize at Rosie's feet to lay;
Wha, sleely, when he did appear,
About his success 'gan to speer.

JOUKUM

Here, bonny lass, your humble slave
Presents you wi' the things you crave,
The riven will and bonnets twa,
Which maks the third worth nought ava:
Our pow'r gi'en up, now I demand
Your promis'd love, and eke your hand.

BARD.

Rose smil'd to see the lad outwitted,
And bonnets to the flames committed.
Immediately an awfu' sound,
As ane wad thought, raise frae the ground;
And syne appear'd a stalwart ghaist,
Whase stern and angry looks amaist
Unhool'd their sauls:—shaking, they saw
Him frae the fire the bonnets draw:
Then came to Jouk, and wi' twa rugs
Increas'd the length o' baith his lugs;
And said—

GHAIST.

Be a' thy days an ass,
An hackney to this cunning lass;
But, for these bonnets, I'll preserve them
For bairns unborn that will deserve them.

BARD.

Wi' that he vanish'd frae their een,
And left poor Jouk wi' breeks not clean:
He shakes, while Rosie rants and capers,
And ca's the vision nought but vapours;
Rubs o'er his cheeks and gab wi' ream,
Till he believes 't to be a dream:
Syne to her closet leads the way,
To soup him up wi' usquebæ.

ROSIE.

Now, bonny lad, ye may be free
To handle ought pertains to me;
And ere the sun, tho' he be dry,
Has driven down the westlin sky,
To drink his wamefu' o' the sea,
There's be but ane o' you and me.
In marriage ye sall ha'e my hand;
But I maun ha'e the sole command
In Fairyland to saw and plant,
And to send there for ought I want.

BARD.

Ay, ay, cries Jouk, a' in a fire,
And stiffening into strong desire.

JOUKUM.

Come, haste thee, let us sign and seal;
And let my billies gang to the d—.

BARD.

Here it wad mak' o'er lang a tale,
To tell how meikle cakes and ale,
And beef, and broe, and gryce, and geese,
And pies a' running o'er wi' creesh,
Was serv'd upon the wedding-table,
To mak' the lads and lasses able
To do, ye ken, what we think shame
(Tho' ilk ane does't) to gi'e 't a name.
But true it is they soon were buckled,
And soon she made poor Jouk a cuckold,
And play'd her bawdy sports before him,
Wi' chiels that car'd nae tippence for him;
Beside a Rosicrucian trick
She had o' dealing wi' Auld Nick;
And whene'er Jouk began to grumble,
Auld Nick in the neist room would rumble.
She drank, and fought, and spent her gear
Wi' dice, and selling o' the mear.
Thus living like a Belzie's get,
She ran hersell sae deep in debt,
By borrowing money at a' hands,
That yearly income o' her lands
Scarce paid the interest o' her bands.
Jouk, ay ca'd wise behind the hand,
The daffin o' his doings fand:
O'er late he now began to see
The ruin o' his family:

But past relief lar'd in a midding,
He's now obliged to do her bidding.
Awa wi' strict command he's sent
To Fairyland to lift the rent,
And wi' him mony a caterpillar,
To rug frae Briss and Bawsie siller;
For her braid table maun be serv'd,
Tho' Fairy fowk should a' be starv'd.
Jouk thus surrounded wi' his guards,
Now plunders haystacks, barns, and yards;
They drive the nowt frae Bristle's fauld,
While he can nought but ban and scald.

BRISTLE.

Vile slave to a hussy ill-begotten,
By mony dads, wi' claps half rotten!
Were't no for honour o' my mither,
I shou'd na think ye were my brither.

JOUKUM.

Dear brither, why this rude reflection?
Learn to be gratefu' for protection;
The Peterenians, bloody beasts!
That gar fowk lik the dowps o' priests,
Else on a brander, like a haddock,
Be broolied, sprowling like a paddock;
These monsters, lang ere now, had come
Wi' faggots, taz, and tuck o' drum,
And twin'd you o' your wealth and lives,
Syne, without speering, kiss'd your wives,
Had not the Rosicrucians stood
The bulwarks o' your rights and blood;

And yet, forsooth, ye girn and grumble,
And, wi' a gab unthankfu', mumble
Out mony a black unworthy curse,
When Rosie bids ye draw your purse;
When she's sae gen'rously content
With not aboon thirty per cent.

BRISTLE.

Damn you and her! though now I'm blae,
I'm hopefu' yet to see the day,
I'll gar ye baith repent that e'er
Ye reav'd by force away my gear,
Without or thanks, or making price,
Or ever speering my advice.

JOUKUM.

Peace, gowk! we naething do at a'
But by the letter o' the law:
Then nae mair wi' your din torment us,
Gowling like ane non compos mentis,
Else Rosie issue may a writ,
To tie you up baith hand and fit,
And dungeon ye but meat or drink,
Till ye be starv'd and die in stink.

BARD.

Thus Jouk and Bristle, when they met,
Wi' sic braw language ither tret.
Just fury glows in Bristle's veins,
And tho' his bonnet he retains,
Yet on his crest he mayna cock it,
But in a coffer close maun lock it.

Bareheaded thus he e'en knocks under,
And lets them drive awa the plunder.
Sae have I seen, beside a tow'r,
The king of brutes oblig'd to cour,
And on his royal paunches thole
A dwarf to prog him wi' a pole;
While he wad shaw his fangs and rage
Wi' bootless wrangling in his cage.—
Now follows that we tak' a peep
O' Bawsy, looking like a sheep,
By Bristle hated and despised,
By Jouk and Rosie little priz'd.
Soon as the horse had heard his brither
Joukum and Rose were prick'd thegither,
Awa he scours o'er hight and how,
Fu' fidgin fain whate'er he dow,
Counting what things he now did mister,
That wad be gi'en him by his sister.
Like shallow bards, wha think they flee,
Because they live sax stories high,
To some poor lifeless lucubration
Prefixes fleeching dedication,
And blythly dream they'll be restor'd
To alehouse credit by my Lord.
Thus Bawsy's mind in plenty row'd,
While he thought on his promis'd gowd
And baillyship, which he wi' fines
Wad mak' like the West India mines;
Arrives wi' future greatness dizzy,
Ca's, where's Mess Jouk?

BEEF.

Mess Jouk is bissy.

BAWSY.

My Lady Rose, is she at leisure?

BEEF.

No, Sir, my Lady's at her pleasure.

BAWSY.

I wait for her or him, go shew.

BEEF.

And pray you, master, wha are you?

BAWSY.

Upo' my saul this porter's saucy!
Sirrah, go tell my name is Bawsy,
Their brither wha made up the marriage.

BEEF.

And sae I thought by your daft carriage.
Between your houghs gae clap your gelding,
Swift hame and feast upon a spelding,
For there's nae room beneath this roof
To entertain a simple coof,
The like o' you, that nane can trust,
Wha to your ain ha'e been unjust.

BARD.

This said, he dadded to the yate,
And left poor Bawsy in a fret,

Wha loudly gowl'd and made a din,
That was o'erheard by a' within.
Quoth Rose to Jouk, Come, let's away,
And see wha's yon mak's a' this fray.
Awa' they went, and saw the creature
Sair runkling ilka silly feature
O' his dull phiz, wi' girns and glooms,
Stamping and biting at his thumbs.
They tented him a little while,
Then came full on him wi' a smile,
Which soon gart him forget the torture
Was rais'd within him by the porter.
Sae will a sucking weanie yell,
But shake a rattle, or a bell,
It hauds its tongue; let that alane,
It to its yamering fa's again;
Lilt up a sang, and straight it's seen
To laugh wi' tears into its een.
Thus eithly anger'd, easily pleas'd,
Weak Bawsy lang they tantaliz'd
Wi' promises right wide extended,
They ne'er perform'd, nor ne'er intended:
But now and then, when they did need him,
A supper and a pint they gie'd him:
That done, they ha'e nae mair to say,
And scarcely ken him the neist day.
Poor fallow! now this mony a year,
Wi' some faint hope, and rowth o' fear,
He has been wrestling wi' his fate,
A drudge to Joukum and his mate.
While Bristle saves his manly look,
Regardless baith o' Rose and Jouk,
Maintains right quietly 'yond the kairns,
His honour, conscience, Wife, and bairns,

Jouk and his rumblegarie wife
Drive on a drunken gaming life,
'Cause, sober, they can get nae rest,
For Nick and Duniwhistle's ghaist,
Wha in the garrets aften tooly,
And shore them wi' a bloody gully.

Thus I ha'e sung, in hamelt rhyme,
A sang that scorns the teeth o' time;
Yet modestly I hide my name,
Admiring virtue mair than fame.
But tent ye wha despise instruction,
And gi'es my wark a wrang construction,
Frae 'hind my curtain, mind I tell ye,
I'll shoot a satire through your belly:
But wha wi' havins jees his bonnet,
And says, Thanks t' ye for your sonnet,
He shanna want the praises due
To generosity.—Adieu.

THE EAGLE AND THE ROBIN REDBREAST.

The Prince of all the fethert kind,
That with spread wings outflees the wind,
And tours far out of human sicht,
To view the schynand orb of licht:
This ryall bird, tho' braif and great,
And armit strang for stern debait,
Nae tyrant is, but condescends
Aftymes to treit inferiour friends,
Ane day at his command did flock
To his hie palace on a rock,

The courtiers of ilk various syze
That swiftly swim in crystal skyis.
Thither the valiant Tersals doup,
And heir rapacious Corbies croup,
With greidy Gleds, and slie Gormahs,
And dinsome Pyis, and clatterin Daws;
Proud Pecocks, and a hundred mae,
Bruscht up thair pens that solemn day,
Bowd first submissive to my lord,
Then tuke thair places at his borde.

Mein tyme, quhile feisting on a fawn,
And drinking blude frae lammies drawn,
A tunefull Robin trig and zung
Hard by upon a bour-tree sung.
He sang the Eagle's ryall lyne,
His persing ee and richt divyne
To sway out owre the fetherit thrang,
Quha dreid his martial bill and fang:
His flicht sublime, and eild renewit,
His mynd with clemencie endewit;
In safter notes he sang his luve;
Mair hie, his beiring bolts for Jove.

The monarch bird with blythness heard
The chaunting litil silvan bard,
Calit up a buzart, quha was then
His favourite and chamberlane.
"Swith to my treasury," quod he,
"And to zon canty Robin gie
As meikle o' our currant geir
As may mentain him through the zeir;
We can weil spair't, and it's his due."
He bad, and furth the Judas flew
Straight to the bench quhair Robin sung,
And with a wickit lieand tung

Said, "Ah! ze sing sae dull and ruch,
Ze haif deivt our lugs mair than enuch;
His majestie hes a nyse eir,
And nae mair of zour stuff can beir:
Poke up your pypes, be nae mair sene
At court; I warn ze as a frein."

He spak, quhyle Robinis swelling breist,
And drouping wings, his grief exprest;
The teirs ran happing doun his cheik,
Grit grew his hairt, he cou'd nocht speik,
No for the tinsell of rewaird,
But that his notes met nae regaird.
Straicht to the schaw he spred his wing,
Resolvit again nae mair to sing,
Quhair princelie bountie is supprest
By sic with quhome they ar opprest,
Quha cannot beir, because they want it,
That ocht suld be to merit grantit.

THE CONCLUSION.

THE AUTHOR'S ADDRESS TO HIS BOOK IN IMITATION OF HORACE. (1)

Dear, vent'rous book, e'en take thy will,
And scowp around the warld thy fill:
Wow! ye're newfangle to be seen,
In gilded Turkey clad, and clean.
Daft, giddy thing! to dare thy fate,
And spang o'er dykes that scar the blate:
But mind when anes ye're to the bent,
Altho' in vain, ye may repent.

(1) [* See Remarks, vol. i. p. 77.]

Alake! I'm fleed thou aften meet
A gang that will thee sourly treat,
And ca' thee dull for a' thy pains,
When damps distress their drowzie brains.
I dinna doubt, whilst thou art new,
Thou'lt favour find frae not a few:
But when thou'rt ruffled and forfairn,
Sair thumb'd by ilka coff or bairn,
Then, then by age ye may grow wise,
And ken things common gi'e nae price.
I'd fret, wae's me! to see thee lye
Beneath the bottom of a pye;
Or cow'd out page by page, to wrap
Up snuff, or sweeties, in a shap.

Awa, sic fears! gae spread my fame,
And fix me an immortal name;
Ages to come shall thee revive,
And gar thee with new honours live.
The future critics, I foresee,
Shall have their notes on notes on thee;
The wits unborn shall beauties find
That never enter'd in my mind.

Now when thou tells how I was bred
But hough enough (1) to a mean trade,
To balance that, pray let them ken
My saul to higher pitch cou'd sten:
And when ye shaw I'm scarce of gear,
Gar a' my virtues shine mair clear:
Tell, I the best and fairest please;
A little man that lo'es my ease,
And never thole these passions lang
That rudely mint to do me wrang:

(1) Very indifferently.

Gin ony want to ken my age,
See anno Dom. (1) on title page;
This year, when springs, by care and skill,
The spacious leaden conduits (2) fill,
And first flow'd up the Castle-hill;
When South-Sea projects cease to thrive,
And only North-Sea seems alive,
Tell them your author's thirty-five.

(1) The first edition of his poems was published in 1721.

(2) The new lead pipes for conveying water to Edinburgh, of four inches and a half in diameter within, and six-tenths of an inch in thickness; all cast in a mould invented by the ingenious Mr. Harding of London.

APPENDIX.

I. EARLY LIFE AND APPRENTICESHIP OF RAMSAY.

There is some misapprehension at least, if not mistake, in the impression conveyed to the general reader by the few allusions of Ramsay's biographers to this obscure period of his life. Dr. Irving says, "his father died in the twenty-fifth year of his age; and his mother, after a short interval, became the wife of a Mr. Crichton, the proprietor of a small portion of land in Lanarkshire. Ramsay, who had now entered into the fifteenth year of his age, was thus reduced to the immediate necessity of betaking himself to some mechanical employment. In the year 1701 he was accordingly bound apprentice to a wig-maker in Edinburgh."

Chalmers states, "his first misfortune consisted in losing, while he was yet an infant, his father, who died before he had himself passed his five-and-twentieth year; and his next unhappiness arose from the marriage of his mother, soon after the death of his father, to Mr. Crichton, one of the very small landholders of the country which is occupied by the great families of Hamilton and Douglas. These sad events left Ramsay without property, or the means of procuring any. And while Scotland was not yet busied with manufactures, nor enriched by commerce, the best resource which occurred to his relations, who had other objects of affection, was to bind him an apprentice to a wig-maker."

According to the Doctor, the second marriage of Ramsay's mother was the cause of his being 'reduced to the immediate necessity of betaking himself to some mechanical employment.' According to Chalmers, it was one of the causes of Ramsay being 'without property, or the means of procuring any.' It may be doubted whether that marriage had any share, of itself, in bringing about either the one or the other. As far as Ramsay's mother is concerned, there is certainly no foundation for such a charge of want of affection, as the sending him to seek the means of subsistence at a premature age would appear to imply. The facts of the case as given by another but anonymous biographer,—and the statement bears internal evidence of being true,—are as follows:—

"For fourteen years, Allan remained in the house of his step-father; and, at the parish school of Crawfordmoor, he received all the education which it was to be his lot in life ever to obtain. The instruction of even a parish school in Scotland, however, extends far; and there is reason to believe, that Ramsay had commenced the study of the classics before he left it. In the preface to his works, he says, 'I understand Horace but *faintly* in the original.' The events of his life make it improbable that he could have acquired this knowledge during his maturer years; and the faintness with which he says he understands the Roman poet, corresponds well with that degree of information which a boy, who had only advanced the first steps in the study of the language, might be afterwards supposed to preserve."([1])

(1) *Lives of Eminent Scotsmen*, Part 1st, Poets, p. 71. London 1821. The view taken by this writer is at variance with other biographies of the poet, in which the scantiness of his education is invariably lamented; but it is a view which every one who knows any thing of Scottish education, and how common it is for even parish school-boys of fourteen to have Horace in their hand, must allow to rest on very strong probability. A. S. (Arthur Sempil, Esq., Secretary to the Society.)

"About the year 1700, Allan lost his mother, and his step-father was not long in discovering that he was now of an age when he ought to shift for himself. The profession to which his own inclination strongly tended, was that of a painter; but his step-father, with the keen-sightedness alike natural to the niggardly and the needy, gave no encouragement to a propensity which he saw could only lead to the means of subsistence, by a way long, circuitous, and deceitful. He took Allan with him to Edinburgh; and, among the various handicrafts which then flourished in the Scottish metropolis, selected that of a wig-maker, as the likeliest to provide the youth speedily with a livelihood, and therefore the fittest to which to bind him in the hard fetters of an apprenticeship."

It would appear from the foregoing narrative,(1) that

(1) There is some reason to conjecture, from the initials (T.T.) affixed to this biography, that it is the production of Telford the celebrated Civil Engineer. Telford it is known was a lover of poetry, and wrote several pieces in his youth. He resided many years in the metropolis, and from his national and literary predilections was likely to have been a member of the association, from whose archives this Memoir has been extracted. As the history of these biographies is curious and not generally known, no apology is offered for quoting the following from the Secretary's address on the occasion of their publication, whereby moreover the reader may judge for himself of the degree of probability which attaches itself to the above conjecture.

"From the Secretary of the Ancient Scots Society,

TO THE PUBLIC.

"THE LITERARY and convivial association known by the name of the 'ANCIENT SCOTS,' is composed of a select number of natives of Scotland, resident in the metropolis, who are fond of cherishing the remembrance of their common country, and cultivating a knowledge of its history and literature. The more effectually to promote these objects, each candidate for admission is required to accompany his application with an Original Memoir, written by himself, of some Scotsman eminent in arts or arms, in letters or in science; and this specimen of his qualifications must be publicly read at some meeting of the Society, previous to that on which the ballot takes place for his election.

"The Society is as old as the accession of James the Sixth (of Scot-

whether or not it may have been to the *death*, it was certainly not to the *marriage* of the mother of Ramsay, that his 'betaking himself to a mechanical employment' is to be attributed. It is not easy to see how that second marriage can be said to have left Ramsay 'without property;' it was his father's early death and the impoverished circumstances of the family at the time of that death, that alone could have produced that result. No doubt it left him without the 'means of procuring any' as lacking the advantages of a liberal education and of an hereditary estate, but these and other disadvantages besides, would alike have happened had his mother continued in widowhood. On the contrary, that marriage seems to have procured for her and her fatherless infant in their destitute condition at once a home and a protector. The propriety of the application of the epithet 'niggardly' to Mr. Crichton may be questioned. He was poor. He had a family of his own, by Allan's mother, to provide for.

land) to the throne of England; but there is a long lapse in its history, during which the whole of its ancient records have been lost. In 1770, it was happily re-established in all its original vigour; and comparatively short as the succeeding period has been, the effect of the peculiar condition attached to admission into its body is of a nature alike gratifying and important. The Society is now in possession of a body of SCOTTISH BIOGRAPHY, which far exceeds all the published collections with which they are acquainted, in authenticity, in interest, and in variety. Scarcely a single Scotsman who is known to fame for any thing great or good, can be named, who has not found, in some Member of the Society, a zealous if not an able biographer. Many of the Memoirs are of a *very original character*, abounding in facts not generally known; *not a few have been written by individuals who have themselves done honour to the Scottish name;* and all of them possess the merit, at least, of having given satisfaction to a numerous circle of individuals neither rash in approbation, nor ill qualified by education and habits to form a just appreciation of literary excellence.

"The plan of giving these Memoirs to the world had of late years been often talked of in the Society; and a conviction became general among the Members, that the publication was an act of duty which they owed equally to the honour of the Scottish nation and character, and to the general interests of learning."

By order of the Committee,

ARTHUR SEMPIL, *Secretary.*"

Scotland was then in an extremely depressed state, without manufactures, without trade,—the nation impoverished and dispirited by the failure of the Darien expedition, by exclusion from direct commerce with the colonies, and by other consequences of the commercial jealousy of England,—so that there was little encouragement for any one, even had he greater facilities for following the profession than Allan 'in the heather whins' could have had, to devote himself to painting as a means of earning a subsistence.

By establishing him moreover as peruke or periwig maker,(1) Mr. C. was,—unconsciously perhaps,—render-

(1) In the celebrated case of the Perruquiers and Coïffeurs of Paris, the art of dressing hair is demonstrated to be not only a liberal art, but equal in rank to those of the poet, the painter, and the statuary. "By those talents," say the dressers of hair, "which are peculiar to ourselves, we give new graces to the beauty sung by the poet; it is when she comes from under our hands, that the painter and statuary represent her; and, if the locks of Berenice have been placed among the stars, who will deny, that to attain this superior glory she was first in want of our aid. A forehead more or less open, a face more or less oval, require very different modes; every where we must embellish nature, or correct her deficiencies. It is also necessary to conciliate with the colour of the flesh that of the dress which is to beautify it; sometimes the whiteness of the skin will be heightened by the auburn tint of the locks, and the too lively splendour of the fair will be softened by the greyish cast with which we tinge the tresses." "Some rigid censurers may perhaps say, that they could do very well without us; and that if there were less art and ornament at the toilettes of the ladies, things would be all for the better. It is not for us to judge, whether the manners of Sparta were preferable to those of Athens; and whether the shepherdess, who gazes on herself in the glassy fountain, interweaves some flowers in her tresses, and adorns herself with natural graces, merits a greater homage than those brilliant citizens who skilfully employ the refinements of a fashionable dress. We must take the age in the state we find it. We feel a congenial disposition to the living manners to which we owe our existence, and while they subsist we must subsist with them." All this, to be sure, is of female locks; but ladies of old wore wigs as well as gentlemen, and where is the proof that Allan was not a maker of wigs to both sexes? Some passages of his poems seem to favour the supposition, that he was equally skilled in the decoration of both; thus,

> Her cockernony snooded up fu' sleek,
> Her haffet-locks hung waving on her cheek.
>
> *Gentle Shepherd, scene* 1.—A. S.
> *Lives of Eminent Scotsmen*, London, p. 72.

ing, as it happened, our poet an eminent service. A wig or periwig was then an indispensable ornament of the heads of lawyers, clergymen, and medical practitioners,(1) and was in general use by the aristocracy of both sexes. Its makers were not as now barbers, nor, except in a rigorous sense, hairdressers. In following his business, Ramsay had opportunities which he adroitly and successfully improved of making himself known to, and of being patronised by, the wisest and noblest of the land.

"He was therefore," says the writer of a recent and lively biographical notice of him, "as his writings show, not ashamed of it, but continued in it long after his apprenticeship had ceased, nor did he abandon it for the more congenial pursuit of bookselling until he had held for some time a name in the poetical world."(2)

Finally, there is not to be found in all the writings of Ramsay, a trace of evidence that he regarded his mother's second marriage, or his early life under his stepfather, as an 'unhappiness.' Yet he was not one likely to have been silent on this point had it been the case. On the contrary, his native cheerfulness of disposition, his delightful pictures of rural and pastoral life, his kindly rēferences to his birthplace and neighbourhood, and his seeking to join a society for aiding objects of charity connected with it,(3) indicate that his reminiscences of Crawford-moor and his youthful home, were of a healthful if not of an affectionate character.

(1) *I theck the out, and line the inside*
Of mony a douse and witty pash,
And baith ways gather in the cash;
Thus heartily I graze and beau it,
And keep my wife ay great wi' poet.
Epistle to Mr. James Arbuckle. 1719.

(2) Hogg's Weekly Instructor, Dec. 5th, 1845.

(3) The Whin Bush Club.

II. RAMSAY'S COURTSHIP.

"What a pretty young lady" (says a lively writer in Hogg's Weekly Instructor,[1]) basing his statement apparently on some well authenticated traditionary report,) "of two-and-twenty could see about 'a small, stunted, dwarfish wig-maker of twenty-four,' to induce her to take the fancy of getting married to him, we cannot say. Such, however, was the case. Before Allan had published a single verse, while he was yet obscure, unfriended, and unknown, he succeeded, by some species of poetic 'glamourie' or other, in captivating at a tea-party the affections of a certain Miss Ross, daughter to one of the city writers. We have the authority of Moore for asserting, that when the heart of a young lady has once gone amissing, the lady herself will soon go in search of it. And so it was here: old Ross, the lady's father, was crowned with one of the most formidable wigs of his day. Allan put it in curl, we are told, once a fortnight, and kept all 'snod.' Miss Ross, till the tea-party night, had never found her way to the tonsor's shop, allowing the servant to call. Now, however, she made frequent visits, and all about 'papa's wig.' Allan had discernment enough to see how matters stood. He had forty times the genius of Andrew Wylie, and was ten degrees 'pawkier.' Mustering in a month or so the necessary amount of fortitude, he made direct proposals to the young lady, and succeeded, though horribly 'blackavized,'[2] and only five feet four, in bearing away, under a terrific fire from

(1) Dec. 5th, 1845.

(2) Justice is scarcely done here to Allan's personal appearance. He at least did not consider himself at all 'horrible' when writing himself,

> 'A black-a-vized *snod dapper* fallow,'
> *Epistle to Mr. James Arbuckle.*

the batteries of some five-and-twenty enraged rivals, his invaluable prize—for so it proved. The union was an exceedingly propitious one; and the poet's domestic felicity was, in the course of the subsequent year, increased by the birth of a son, destined in a sister art to all but rival his father—we mean *the* Allan Ramsay who was afterwards portrait-painter to George III."

III. RAMSAY'S RESIDENCES.

I. AT THE SIGN OF THE MERCURY OPPOSITE TO NIDDRY'S WYND.

This house, of which a view is given in the Vignette title-page to the present volume, lies on the north side of the High Street, at the head of Kinloch's or the second close now remaining in that side of the High Street below the Tron Church, and opposite to Niddry's Wynd. We copy the following description and account of it from a meritorious and recent publication.(1)

"The ancient timber fronted land which faces the street at the head of this close is one possessing peculiar claims to our interest, as the scene of Allan Ramsay's earlier labours, where, 'at the sign of the Mercury, opposite to Niddry's Wynd,' he prosecuted his latter business as author, editor, and bookseller. From thence issued his poems printed in single sheets, or half sheets, as they were written, in which shape they are reported to have

nor likely to run a risk of being outrivalled by ordinary competitors, when he adds in the same letter,

'I the best and *fairest* please.'

That he prefixed his portrait to the earliest collection of his works, may be further evidence of his own opinion in this respect.

(1) Memorials of Edinburgh in the Olden Time, by Daniel Wilson, F.S.A., Scot., vol. II., pp. 31, 32.

found a ready sale; the citizens being in the habit of sending their children with a penny for 'Allan Ramsay's last piece.' Encouraged by the favourable reception of his poetic labours, he at length published proposals for a re-issue of his works in a collected form, and, accordingly, in 1721, they appeared in one handsome quarto volume, with a portrait of the author from the pencil of his friend Smibert. Ramsay continued to carry on business at the sign of the Mercury, till the year 1725, so that nearly all his original publications issued from this ancient fabric." The accompanying vignette represents the former building as it existed previous to 1845, when a portion of the timber front was removed, and the picturesque character of the old land somewhat marred by modern alterations.

"Immediately to the east of Ramsay's old shop, a plain and narrow pend gives access to Carrubber's close, the retreat of the faithful remnant of the Jacobites of 1688. Here, about half way down the close, on the east side, St. Paul's chapel still stands, a plain and unpretending edifice, erected immediately after the Revolution. Thither the persecuted Bishop, and his stanch non-jurant followers repaired on the downfall of the national establishment of Episcopacy, and there they continued to worship within its narrow bounds, amid frequent interruptions, particularly after the rising of 1745, resolutely persisting for nearly a century in excluding the name of the 'Hanoverian usurpers' from their devotions. The chapel is still occupied by a congregation of Scottish Episcopalians, but the homely worshippers of modern times form a striking contrast to the stately squires and dames who once were wont to frequent the unpretending fane that sufficed to accommodate the whole dis-established episcopacy of the capital.

"This old close was the scene of the only unsuccessful speculation of our poet, whose prudent self-control enabled him through life to avoid the sorrows that so often beset the poet's path, and to find in the Muse the handmaid of wealth. Allan Ramsay was strongly attached to the drama, and in his desire for its encouragement, he built a play-house at the foot of Carrubber's close, about the year 1736, which involved him in very considerable expense. It was closed immediately after by the act for licensing the stage, which was passed in the following year, and the poet's sole resource was in writing a rhyming complaint to the Court of Session, which appeared soon after in the Gentleman's Magazine. The abortive play-house has since served many singular and diverse purposes. It is the same building, we believe, which now bears the name of St. Andrew's chapel, bestowed on it soon after the failure of the poet's dramatic speculation."

II. LUCKENBOOTHS, HIGH STREET.

A VIEW of this second residence and shop of Ramsay forms the Vignette title-page to the second volume, and is deserving of attention on various grounds. We again copy from Mr. Wilson's work an account of it, and of the street in which it lay.

"In his amusing narrative of his 'Pennylesse Pilgrimage' from London to Edinburgh, published in 1618, Taylor, the Water Poet,(1) describes the High Street as 'the fairest and goodliest street that ever mine eyes beheld, for I did never see or hear of a street of that length, which is half an English mile from the Castle to a faire port, which they call the Neather Bow, . . . the build-

(1) Memorials of Edinburgh in the Olden Time, by Daniel Wilson, F.S.A., Scot., vol. I., pp. 197—201.

ings on each side of the way being all of squared stone, five, six, and seven stories high.' 'When I came first into the High Street,' says another traveller, writing more than a century after him, 'I thought I had never seen any thing of the kind more magnificent.' 'You have seen,' says Topham, writing from Edinburgh in 1776, 'the famous street at Lisle, la Rue Royale, leading to the port of Tournay, which is said to be the finest in Europe; but, which I can assure you, is not to be compared either in length or breadth to the High Street, at Edinburgh.' Similar remarks might be quoted from later travellers, we shall only add that of our greatest living landscape painter, Turner, expressed since the removal of the Luckenbooths, that 'the *old* High Street of Edinburgh was only surpassed in Europe by that of Oxford.' Imposing as the effect of the High Street still is,—although scarcely a year passes without the loss of some one or other of its ancient and characteristic features,—we doubt if its broad and unencumbered thoroughfare will ever again meet with the praise that it received from travellers who had to pass through the narrow defile of the *Purses*, or thread their way along by the still more straitened *Krames* that clung on to the old church walls.

"The Luckenbooths were a range of ancient buildings that occupied the middle of the High Street, between the Tolbooth and the Cross, forming a range of irregular and picturesque lands, nearly all with timber fronts and lofty peaked gables projecting into the street.

"The buildings of the middle row were extremely irregular in character. The timber land immediately in front of St. Giles' steeple was only three stories high, and with a very low-pitched roof, so as to admit of the clock being seen by passers in the High Street; while the one adjoining it, to the west, after rising to the height of five stories, and finishing with two very steep overhang-

ing gables in front, had a sixth reared above these, with a flat lead roof,—like a crow's nest stuck between the battlements of some ancient peel tower! The two most easterly lands in the Luckenbooths differed from the rest in being tall and substantial erections of polished ashlar work. One of these which presented its main front down the High Street, yielded in interest to none of the private buildings of Edinburgh. 'Creech's Land,' as it was termed, according to the fashion of the burgh, after one of its latest and most worthy occupants, formed the peculiar haunt of the Muses during the last century. Thither Allan Ramsay removed in 1725,—immediately after publishing the first complete edition of his great pastoral poem, from the sign of the Mercury's Head, opposite Niddry's Wynd, and there,—on the first floor, which had formerly been the London Coffee House,—he substituted for his former celestial sign, the heads of Ben Jonson, and Drummond of Hawthornden, and greatly extended his business with the profits of his successful devotion to the Muses. It was on his removal to this central locality that he established his circulating library,—the first institution of the kind known in Scotland,—not without both censure and interference from some of the stricter leaders of society at that period. 'Profaneness,' says Wodrow, 'is come to a great height; all the villanous, profane, and obscene books of plays, printed at London by Curle and others, are got down from London, by Allan Ramsay, and lent out for an easy price to young boys, servant women of the better sort, and gentlemen; and vice and obscenity dreadfully propagated.' Ramsay's fame and fortune progressed with unabating vigour, after this period; and his shop became the daily resort of the leading wits and literati, as well as of every traveller of note that visited the Scottish capital.

"Gay, the poet,—who, during the latter years of his

life, seems to have been as regularly installed into the household of the Duchess of Queensberry, as ever any court-minstrel was in a palace of old,—accompanied his patroness to Edinburgh, and resided for some time in the Canongate, at Queensberry House. He became, as was to be anticipated, a frequent visitor of the Scottish poet, and is said to have derived great amusement from Ramsay's humorous descriptions of the leading citizens as they daily assembled at the Cross, within sight of his windows. That central spot, 'where merchants most do congregate,' was then adorned with the ancient structure, demolished in 1756, and formed the daily promenade for the ruffled and powdered exquisite to display his finery, no less than for the trader bent only on business. The wits of Edinburgh used to meet there, at the poet's shop, to amuse themselves with the intelligence of the day, and the most recent news in the world of letters. The prospect, however, from Allan Ramsay's window, possessed other attractions for the poet besides the grave and humorous glimpses of human nature it afforded; for owing to the singular site of the Scottish capital, it commanded, although in the very heart of the town, a view for many miles into the country, looking across Preston Bay to the fertile landscape of East Lothian, and the heights that skirt the German ocean.

"Allan Ramsay's library and business were transferred by his successor, Mr. James Macewan, to the shop below; and from him they passed into the hands of Mr. Alexander Kincaid, an eminent bookseller and publisher, and a man of a highly cultivated mind, who took an active share in the management of civic affairs, and died while filling the office of Lord Provost, January 21st, 1777. He was interred with all the honours due to his rank, and his funeral appears to have excited an universal sensation at the period. During his time the old land acquir-

ed an additional interest as a favourite lounge of Smollett, who visited Edinburgh in 1776, and resided for some time at his sister's house in the Canongate. He appears to have derived the same amusement as Gay from watching the curious groups that daily assembled in front of this ancient tenement. In the lively account of his visit, given in Humphrey Clinker, he remarks—'All the people of business at Edinburgh, and even the genteel company, may be seen standing in crowds every day, from one to two in the afternoon, in the open street, at a place where formerly stood a market-cross, a curious piece of Gothic architecture, still to be seen in Lord Somerville's garden in this neighbourhood.' Kincaid was succeeded in the shop and business, by Mr. William Creech, in whose hands this haunt of the Muses suffered no diminution of its attractions. He received a liberal education in early life; added to which, an inexhaustible fund of amusing anecdote, and great conversational powers, served through life to make his society be courted by the most eminent men of his time, notwithstanding the acquirement latterly of penurious habits, and such a miserly keenness for money, as precluded not benevolence alone, but even, it is said, the honest discharge of commercial obligations. For forty years Mr. Creech carried on the most extensive publishing concern in Scotland, and during the whole of this long period, nearly all the valuable literary productions of the time passed through his hands. He published the writings of the celebrated judge and philosopher, Lord Kames, who appears to have regarded him with friendship and esteem. He was also the publisher of the works of Drs. Blair, Beattie, Campbell, (the opponent of Hume,) Cullen, Gregory, Adam Smith, Henry Mackenzie, (the Man of Feeling,) Lord Woodhouselee, Dugald Stewart, and Burns, besides many others of inferior note; all of whom resorted to the old land in the Luckenbooths,

or to the more select assemblies that frequently took place at his breakfast table, designated by the wits *Creech's levees*. The old bibliopolist is the subject of Burns's amusing poem '*Willie's awa*,' written on the occasion of a long visit he paid to London in 1787, and forwarded to him by the poet at the time. One or two of its stanzas are very lively and characteristic:

O Willie was a witty wight,
And had of things an unco slight;
Auld Reekie aye he keepit tight,
And trig and braw;
But now they'll busk her like a fright,
Willie's awa.

Nae mair we see his levee door
Philosophers and poets pour,
And toothy critics by the score
In bloody raw;
The adjutant of a' the core,
Willie's awa.

From the same classic haunt, the Mirror and Lounger were originally issued, the appearance of which formed a new era in the literature of Edinburgh. The first paper of the Mirror appeared on Saturday, 23d January, 1779, and created quite a sensation among the *blue-stocking* coteries of the capital. The succeeding numbers were delivered at Mr. Creech's shop, every Wednesday and Saturday, and afforded a general source of interest and literary amusement. Mr. Mackenzie was the conductor and principal writer, but the chief contributors latterly formed themselves into the 'Mirror Club,' which consisted of Henry Mackenzie, Lord Craig, Lord Abercromby, Lord Bannatyne, Lord Cullen, George Home of Wedderburn, William Gordon of Newhall, and George Ogilvie, advocates. Mr. Creech, like his predecessor, bore his share in the civic government, and twice filled the office

of Lord Provost. His reputation is still preserved by his '*Fugitive Pieces*,' a work of considerable local celebrity, although affording a very imperfect idea of the wit and humour that led Burns to style him 'a birkie weel worth gowd,' and made him a favourite among the large circle of eminent men who adorned the Scottish capital in the eighteenth century. He died in 1815, only two years before the interesting old land, which bore his name for nearly half a century, was levelled with the ground."

The outside stair, given in our Vignette, at the north corner which gave access, according to the usual style of the older houses, to Allan Ramsay's library, had been removed in 1805. The *laigh shop*, which occupied the subterranean portion of the building, was for many years the warehouse of an extensive and wealthy firm in the button trade, who in the reign of George III., when the copper coinage was so bad that no mint halfpennies would pass current in Scotland, produced a coinage of Edinburgh halfpennies of excellent workmanship, bearing on one side the City arms, boldly struck, and on the other, the figure of St. Andrew, which continued in common use until the close of the century, but are now only to be met with in the cabinets of the curious.

The ancient cross of Edinburgh, which appears in the front of the Vignette, occupied the place there assigned to it until the year 1756, when its removal being determined on by the civic dignitaries, Lord Sommerville obtained permission to preserve it by placing it on a part of his estate of Drum near Edinburgh, where it is still to be found. "The lower part of it[1] was an octagonal building of a mixed style of architecture, rebuilt in the year 1617. In its reconstruction, the chief ornaments of the ancient building had been preserved; the heads, in

(1) Memorials of Edinburgh in the Olden Time, by Daniel Wilson, F.S.A., Scot., vol. I., pp. 114—116.

basso relievo, which surmounted seven of the arches, have been referred, by eminent antiquaries, to the remote era of the lower empire. Four of these were placed by Mr. Walter Ross, in his tower at Deanhaugh, and on its demolition in 1814, they were secured by Sir Walter Scott, along with a large shallow stone basin, which served as the fountain from whence wine was distributed at the Cross on occasions of festivity. All of these objects are now among the antiquities at Abbotsford.

"The ancient pillar which surmounted the octagonal building, is an octagonal Gothic pillar twenty feet high, built of separate stones, held together by iron clamps, with a remarkably beautiful Gothic capital, consisting of dragons with their heads and tails intertwined, and surmounted by a battlemented top, on which the Unicorn was formerly seated, holding an iron cross.

"From this ancient edifice, royal proclamations, and the more solemn denunciations of the law, were announced; and here also the chief pageants were displayed on occasions of public rejoicings. Before the art of printing was invented, all acts of Parliament and other matters of public interest were published from it to the people, and from thence also the mimic heralds of the unseen world, cited the gallant James and the nation's chivalry to the domains of Pluto, immediately before the battle of Flodden.

"No incident in history appears to us more strongly to mark the perversion of taste, and the total absence of the wholesome spirit of veneration, that prevailed during the eighteenth century, than the demolition of this most interesting national monument. The love of destructiveness could alone instigate the act, for its site was in the widest part of the High Street, at a time when the Luckenbooths narrowed the upper part of that thoroughfare to half its breadth, and immediately below it stood

the guard-house, 'a long, low, ugly building, which, to a fanciful imagination, might have suggested the idea of a long black snail crawling up the middle of the High Street, and deforming its beautiful esplanade.'(1) No such haste, however, was shown in removing this unsightly building. Its deformity gave no offence to civic taste, and it continued to encumber the street till near the close of the century. Propositions had been made at various times for the restoration of the City Cross. We shall only add, that until our civic rulers manifest, by some such act, a regard for the monuments of antiquity committed to their care, they must take their unenviable share in the minstrel's curse:—

'Dun Edin's Cross, a pillar'd stone,
Rose on a turret octagon;
But now is razed that monument,
Whence royal edict rang,
And voice of Scotland's law was sent
In glorious trumpet clang.
O! be his tomb as lead to lead,
Upon its dull destroyer's head!—
A minstrel's malison is said.'"(2)

III. RAMSAY'S HOUSE, CASTLE HILL.

The Vignette title to the first volume presents a view of this mansion, which "occupies," says the Historian of Edinburgh in the Olden Time, "a prominent position on the north Castle bank, and associates the surrounding district with the name of Scotland's great pastoral poet, Allan Ramsay. The house is of a fantastic shape, but it occupies a position that, we may safely say, could not be surpassed in any city in Europe, as the site of a 'Poet's Nest.' It is surrounded by a beautiful garden, and though

(1) Heart of Mid-Lothian, vol. I. p. 247.
(2) Marmion, canto v. v. 25.

now in the very heart of the city, it still commands a magnificent and varied prospect, bounded only on the distant horizon by the Highland hills. At the time of its erection, it was a suburban retreat, uniting the attractions of a country villa, with an easy access to the centre of the city. We have been told by a gentleman of antiquarian tastes, from information communicated to him, nearly fifty years ago, that Ramsay applied to the Crown for as much ground from the Castle Hill as would serve him to build a cage for his *burd*, meaning his wife, to whom he was warmly attached, and hence the octagon shape it assumed, not unlike an old parrot cage! If so, she did not live to share its comforts, her death having occurred in 1743. Here the Poet retired in his sixtieth year, anticipating the enjoyment of its pleasing seclusion for many years to come; and although he had already exhausted his energies in the diligent pursuit of business, he spent, in this lovely retreat, the chief portion of the last twelve years of his life in ease and tranquil enjoyment, though interrupted towards its close by a painful malady. He was remarkably cheerful and lively to the last, and his powers of conversation were such, that his company was eagerly courted by all ranks of society; yet he delighted in nothing so much as seeing himself surrounded by his own family and their juvenile companions, with whom he would join in their sports with the most hearty life and good humour.

"On the death of Allan Ramsay, in 1757, he was succeeded in his house by his son, the eminent protrait painter, who added a new front and wing to it, and otherwise modified its original grotesqueness; and since his time it was the residence of the Rev. Dr. Baird, late Principal of the University. Some curious discoveries, made in the immediate neighbourhood of the house, in the lifetime of the poet, are thus recorded in the Scots

Magazine for 1754,—'About the middle of June, some workmen employed in levelling the upper part of Mr. Ramsay's garden, in the Castle Hill, fell upon a subterraneous chamber about fourteen feet square, in which were found an image of white stone, with a crown upon its head, supposed to be the Virgin Mary; two brass candlesticks; about a dozen of ancient Scottish and French coins, and some other trinkets, scattered among the rubbish. By several remains of burnt matter, and two cannon balls, it is guessed that the building above ground was destroyed by the Castle in some former confusion.' This we would be inclined to think may have formed a portion of the ancient church of St. Andrew, of which so little is known; though, from Maitland's description, the site should perhaps be looked for somewhat lower down the bank. It is thus alluded to by him,—'At the southern side of the Nordloch, near the foot of the Castle Hill, stood a church, the remains whereof I am informed were standing within these few years, by Professor Sir Robert Stewart, who had often seen them. This I take to have been the Church of St. Andrew, near the Castle of Edinburgh, to the Trinity Altar, in which Alexander Curor, vicar of Livingston, by a deed of gift, of the 20th December 1848, gave a perpetual annuity of twenty merks Scottish money.'"(1)

IV. FIRST REPRESENTATION OF THE GENTLE SHEPHERD.

We are indebted for the following anecdote to the memoir already referred to.(2) Besides being interesting in

(1) Maitland, p. 206.
(2) Lives of Eminent Scotsmen, page 92. London, 1821.—See page 211.

itself, it supplies a passage in the local history of Edinburgh, not we believe known to its citizens.

"The Gentle Shepherd, though adapted to the stage, did not make its appearance upon it till several years after its publication. The people of Scotland had not as yet thrown off those prejudices, with which ages of stern Presbyterianism had filled them, against all sorts of theatrical representations; there were, therefore, no native actors, and, of course, none who could represent a piece so entirely Scottish.(1) It was the comedy of the Gentle

(1) In a prologue to the university of Oxford written by Dryden, he makes the following apology for the absence of several performers from England:

> "Our brethren have from Thames to Tweed departed,
> And of our sisters, all the kinder hearted,
> To *Edinborough* gone, or coacht or carted." A. S.

It was not so much the prejudices of stern presbyterianism, or even religious opinions of any kind, but the absence of any compositions adapted for dramatic representation in that language, that prevented *native Scotsmen* from becoming actors. It is not to be supposed that when David Hume himself could not so far overcome his Scotch accent, as not to provoke a smile when he harangued an English Society, that any Scotchman of that age, of the condition in life that would warrant his betaking himself to the profession, would be tolerated on the English stage, or could hope to earn a living by it. The dislike of the people of Scotland to theatrical representations, was the natural effect of the licentious character of the pieces of the time on the minds of a sober people. The writings of the earlier dramatists were not prohibited, but expressly admitted as proper for theatrical exhibitions by the Book of Discipline (pp. 145, 161.), provided the subjects were not scriptural. It is true, however, says Forsyth, "that on the whole the Scotch have no great fondness for the entertainment of the theatre. The novelty of the appearance of any very distinguished performer excites their attention for a short time, and produces crowded houses; but, in general, the theatre is little attended by genteel people in the middle ranks of society. It is chiefly supported in Edinburgh by young men, the junior practitioners of the law, and students at the university, and by the families of country gentlemen, who reside in Edinburgh during the winter, who go thither occasionally as to a place where they are to display themselves, and to see other persons of their own rank. Neither does this indifference to the theatre among the Scottish nation any longer result from religious opinions or prejudices. Sober families find more pleasure in domestic society, or in the visits of their acquaintances; and when money is to be expended, the social and more substantial pleasure of giving and receiving good suppers or dinners is greatly preferred."

Shepherd, however, which was destined to strike the first blow at this popular aversion to the drama; and the manner in which this came about, affords a striking illustration of the truth, that every attempt to enslave the minds of men is only productive of an ultimate increase in liberality of sentiment.

"A printer in Edinburgh, of the name of Robert Drummond, who had been employed to print one of the editions of the Gentle Shepherd, having, after the rebellion of 1745, published a satirical poem, called the *Town Council*, containing a smart attack on Mr. Drummond the provost of Edinburgh; Dr. Wishart, principal of the university; Dr. Webster, one of the ministers of the city;(1) and several other eminent Whig characters;—a prosecution

(1) All of them very estimable men; a circumstance which makes it the more surprising, that they should have countenanced the singularly oppressive proceedings which were adopted against the printer of this mere jeu d'esprit. One of the severest things in it was, an insinuation that Dr. Webster, who was much in the confidence of the town council, and its right hand in all the public improvements then going on, had cost the city more claret than would float a seventy-four! There might be some exaggeration in the estimate, but as no one ever doubted this reverend doctor's love for claret, of which, even to this day, the people of Edinburgh preserve many amusing recollections, it was rather too bad to take a poor satirist to task for a mere over-measurement.

Let us hope, that the reverend doctor himself had no active share in this inglorious prosecution; he was himself a poet of no mean pretensions; and, at his death, in the 76th year of his age, left behind him a character, distinguished for liberality and benevolence. Hitherto, Dr. Webster has been little, if at all, known in the light of a poet, and his claims to that character rest, it is believed, on a single piece, which Pinkerton has printed in his Select Scottish Ballads, vol. ii. No. 33, without being aware of the name of the author. It is a piece, however, of rare merit; in elegance and warmth, it rivals even the effusions of Catullus. It was written in allusion to a real event; his own marriage to a lady of noble family. The following is the initiatory stanza:

> Oh! how could I venture to luve ane like thee,
> And you not despise a poor conquest like me?
> On lords, thy admirers, could look wi' disdain,
> And knew I was naething, yet pitied my pain?
> You said, while they teased you with nonsense and dress,
> "When real the passion the vanity's less."
> You saw through that silence which others despise,
> And, while beaus were a-tauking, read luve in my eyes. A. S.

was instituted against him before the magistrates, that is, before the very individuals who were themselves among the parties satirized and complaining. The judgment was such as might be expected from irritated men deciding in their own cause. They found that 'the poem contained many scandalous, seditious, calumnious, and malicious expressions;' and they therefore ordered the printer, Robert Drummond, 'to be carried to prison, and thence, on the 25th of November, betwixt the hours of twelve and one, to the cross of Edinburgh, there to stand bareheaded with a label on his breast, inscribed thus: '*For printing and publishing a false, scandalous, and defamatory libel;*' till all the copies seized of the poem should be burnt by the hangman; then to lie in prison till he should give bond to remove out of the city and liberties, and not return for a year on pain of £100 sterling, and suffering imprisonment till the remainder of the year was run, and to be deprived of the privileges of a freeman for a year.' An application was made to the Court of Justiciary for an alteration of this unjust and cruel sentence, but without effect. Poor Drummond underwent the whole punishment awarded; his printing office was shut up; and his workmen, of whom he had employed a considerable number, were thrown idle on the town.

"Among the works which Drummond had most recently printed, was the edition of the Gentle Shepherd. While it was passing through the hands of his compositors, they had committed to memory some of its most striking scenes, which they used to take pleasure in reciting among themselves; and now that they were deprived of employment by the ruin of their master, the idea happily struck them of attempting a public representation of the comedy for their common benefit. The manager of the theatre, then situated in the Canongate, readily agreed to

give them the use of his stage; and the great body of the public, comprehending especially the middling and lower classes, hitherto(1) the most adverse to theatrical representations, were induced, from compassion for the fate of Drummond and his men, the victims of power, to suspend their prejudices for a moment, and to regard the humble attempt with that silent acquiescence, which, by leaving the young and gay-hearted to follow their inclinations, had all the effect of a more open encouragement. On the first performance of the opera, the house was crowded in every part; and it was repeated several successive nights to such numerous audiences, that tiers of benches were erected upon the stage to accommodate the overflow. The distresses of the suffering printers were thus, in a great measure relieved; but a more general and lasting advantage, derived from these representations, was the cessation of that rooted antipathy which a religious people, still warm with convert zeal, had, till now, persisted in maintaining towards the entertainments of the stage.(2)

(1) The dramatic productions of the reign of Charles II., then almost the only ones performed on the stage, were of the most immoral and even indecent character. The wit, which was their only redeeming character, was, where not obscene, conventional, and could not be enjoyed even if its language had been understood, by a more sober and less artificial people, who were besides stung into dislike of England and English manners by recent wrongs and insult.

(2) The success of the earlier representations of the Gentle Shepherd on the Scottish stage,—which however in its full extent lasted for a few years only, and was the effect of favouring circumstances, although this pastoral continued to appear annually on the Edinburgh boards for nearly three-quarters of a century,—is a proof that to dramatic performances of an innocent and instructive character, the presbyterian party in Scotland cherish no hostility. The narrator of this anecdote is in mistake, however, in inferring that the taste of the public for the impure and inflated productions of the stage was created or stimulated by the success of the first performance of the chaste pastoral of our author. There was a theatre and a regular dramatic company in Edinburgh when that took place, and had been for half a century previous; there is no more at the present day, although its population has increased threefold since then. The Edinburgh stage is supported in that moderate measure, which becomes a sober and thoughtful people. The performances are respectable as to at once subjects and histrionic talent The first actors

The multitude being thus dragged, as it were, by sympathy for oppressed merit, to the interdicted regions of pleasure, were induced 'to taste the forbidden fruit, and, pleased with the relish, they fed plenteously. Finding themselves not *poisoned* by the sweets, they returned to the feast with an increased appetite, and brought with them fresh guests to partake of the enticing fare.'"

V. IS THE GENTLE SHEPHERD ADAPTED FOR DRAMATIC REPRESENTATION?

Notwithstanding its success during a number of years on the Edinburgh and the Scottish provincial stage, the Gentle Shepherd, neither in its original version nor in a translation into modern English, by Richard Tickle, Esq.—although the latter, according to Jackson, was ably executed, strongly cast, and excellently performed at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane,—has met with much encouragement in England, or been able to obtain a place in its acted drama. Even in Scotland it has of late years ceased to attract attention as a subject for the stage. This "indifferent success even with a strong national partiality in its favour," as Dr. Beattie says, "may perhaps be in a great measure ascribed to a deficiency on the part of the actors. The British actors are almost entirely unacquainted with dramas of the pastoral kind; and their mode of pronouncing the Scottish dialect is generally distorted and preposterous. The number of professional comedians furnished by North Britain is very inconsiderable; and the natives of that country who, for their own amusement, have occasionally at-

have ever regarded with anxious respect the opinions and criticisms of their Edinburgh audiences.

tempted Ramsay's principal characters, must necessarily be supposed to have laboured under all the disadvantages incident to inexperience."(1) It is probable that it never appeared as an *acted* drama to so great advantage as on the occasion of its first representation in Edinburgh. The natural and yet not undignified pronunciation of the Scottish language on the part of the unemployed printers, some of them probably natives of the district in which its scenes are laid, and their knowledge of the manners and sentiments of its characters, must have given to their representation of it peculiar advantages, especially when played before a sympathizing and *thoroughly* appreciating auditory. It is doubtful, however, if this pastoral poem is in its nature so well adapted for the stage as for the closet. The sentiments are rather descriptive and didactic than effectively dramatic. It appeals to the sensibilities rather than to the passions. The following 'testimonies of authors,' one of them of recent date, may be quoted in corroboration of this opinion, and also as to the general merits of the poem—in addition to the celebrated critical dissertation of Lord Woodhouselee, given in an early part of the work. It will be observed that they all speak of it throughout as a *poem*, and never, except in the sense of a pastoral one, as a *drama*.

"Ramsay," says Mr. Ritson, "was a man of strong natural parts, and a fine poetical genius, of which his celebrated *pastoral* The Gentle Shepherd will ever remain a substantial monument; *The Lass of Patie's Mill, The Yellow-hair'd Laddie, Farewell to Lochaber*, and some other songs, must be allowed equal to any, and even superior, in point of pastoral simplicity, to most lyric productions, either in the Scottish or any other language."(2)

(1) Irving's Lives of Scottish Poets, vol. ii. p. 338.
(2) Ritson's Hist. Essay on Scottish Song, p. lxiii.

"No attempt to naturalize *pastoral poetry*," says Dr. Aikin, "appears to have succeeded better than Ramsay's Gentle Shepherd: it has a considerable air of reality, and the descriptive parts, in general, are in the genuine taste of beautiful simplicity."(1)

"Whether the dialect of Scotland," says Mr. Roscoe, "be more favourable to attempts of this nature, or whether we are to seek for the fact in the character of the people, or the peculiar talents of the writers, certain it is that the idiom of that country has been much more successfully employed in poetical composition, than that of any other part of these kingdoms, and that this practice may there be traced to a very early period. In later times the beautiful *dramatic poem* of The Gentle Shepherd has exhibited rusticity without vulgarity, and elegant sentiment without affectation."(2)

"I must not," says Dr. Blair, "omit the mention of another *pastoral drama*, which will bear being brought into comparison with any composition of this kind, in any language; that is, Allan Ramsay's Gentle Shepherd. It is a great disadvantage to this beautiful poem, that it is written in the old rustic dialect of Scotland, which, in a short time, will probably be entirely obsolete, and not intelligible; and it is a farther disadvantage that it is so entirely formed on the rural manners of Scotland, that none but a native of that country can thoroughly understand or relish it. But, though subject to these local disadvantages, which confine its reputation within narrow limits, it is full of so much natural description, and tender sentiment, as would do honour to any poet. The characters are well drawn, the incidents affecting; the scenery and manners lively and just. It affords a strong proof, both of the power which nature and simplicity

(1) Aikin's Essays on Song-Writing, p. 33.
(2) Roscoe's Life of Lorenzo de' Medici, vol. i. p. 296.

possess, to reach the heart in every sort of writing; and of the variety of pleasing characters and subjects with which *pastoral poetry*, when properly managed, is capable of being enlivened." (1)

"The sentiments of that piece," says Dr. Beattie, "are natural, the circumstances interesting; the characters well drawn, well distinguished, and well contrasted; and the fable has more probability than any other pastoral drama I am acquainted with. To an Englishman who has never conversed with the common people of Scotland, the language would appear only antiquated, obscure, or unintelligible; but to a Scotchman who thoroughly understands it, and is aware of its vulgarity, it appears ludicrous; from the contrast between meanness of phrase and dignity or seriousness of sentiment. This gives a farcical air even to the most affecting part of the *poem;* and occasions an impropriety of a peculiar kind, which is very observable in the representation. And accordingly, this play, with all its merit, and with a strong national partiality in its favour, has never given general satisfaction upon the stage." (2)

"Poetical expression in humble life," says Leigh Hunt, in one of the sweetest essays upon pastoral writing that has appeared in the present day, "is to be found all over the south. In the instances of Burns, Ramsay, and others, the north also has seen it. Indeed, it is not a little remarkable, that Scotland, which is more northern than England, and possesses not even a nightingale, has had more of it than its southern neighbour."

"Allan Ramsay is the prince of the homely pastoral drama. He and Burns have helped Scotland for ever to take pride in its heather, and its braes, and its bonny rivers, and be ashamed of no honest truth in high estate

(1) Blair's Lectures on Rhetoric, vol. iii. p. 126.
(2) Beattie's Essays, p. 382.

or in low; an incalculable blessing. Ramsay is entitled not only to the designation we have given him, but in some respects is the best pastoral writer in the world. There are, in truth, two sorts of genuine pastoral—the high ideal of Fletcher and Milton, which is justly to be considered the more poetical,—and the homely ideal, as set forth by Allan Ramsay and some of the Idyls of Theocritus, and which gives us such feelings of nature and passion as poetical rustics not only can, but have entertained and eloquently described. And we think the Gentle Shepherd, 'in some respects,' the best pastoral that ever was written, not because it has anything, in a poetical point of view, to compare with Fletcher and Milton, but because there is, upon the whole, more faith and more love in it, and because the kind of idealized truth which it undertakes to represent, is delivered in a more corresponding and satisfactory form than in any other entire pastoral drama. In fact, the Gentle Shepherd has no alloy whatsoever to its pretensions, *such as they are*—no failure in plot, language, or character—nothing answering to the coldness and irrelevances of 'Comus,' nor to the offensive and untrue violations of decorum in the 'Wanton Shepherdess' of Fletcher's pastoral, and the pedantic and ostentatious chastity of his Faithful one. It is a pure, healthy, natural, and (of its kind) perfect plant, sprung out of an unluxuriant but not ungenial soil; not hung with the beauty and fragrance of the productions of the higher regions of Parnassus; not waited upon by spirits and enchanted music; a dog-rose, if you will; say rather, a rose in a cottage-garden, dabbled with the morning dew, and plucked by an honest lover to give to his mistress.

"Allan Ramsay's poem is not only a probable and pleasing story, containing charming pictures, much knowledge of life, and a good deal of quiet humour, but

in some respects it may be called classical, if by classical is meant ease, precision, and unsuperfluousness of style. Ramsay's diction is singularly straightforward, seldom needing the assistance of inversions; and he rarely says anything for the purpose of 'filling up;'—two freedoms from defect the reverse of vulgar and commonplace; nay, the reverse of a great deal of what pretends to be fine writing, and is received as such. We confess we never tire of dipping into it, 'on and off,' any more than into Fletcher or Milton, or into Theocritus himself, who, for the union of something higher with true pastoral, is unrivalled in short pieces. The Gentle Shepherd is not a forest, nor a mountain-side, nor Arcady; but it is a field full of daisies, with a brook in it, and a cottage 'at the sunny end;' and this we take to be no mean thing, either in the real or the ideal world. Our Jar of Honey may well lie for a few moments among its heather, albeit filled from Hybla. There are bees, 'look you,' in Habbie's How. Theocritus and Allan shake hands over a shepherd's pipe. Take the beginning of Scene ii., Act i., both for description and dialogue:—

'A flowrie howm between twa verdant braes,
Where lassies use to wash and spread their claes;
A trottin' birnie wimplin' through the ground,
Its channel peebles shining smooth and round.
Here view *twa barefoot beauties*, clean and clear,
First please your eye, next gratify your ear,
While Jenny *what she wishes discommends*,
And Meg, with better sense, true love defends.

JENNY.

Come, Meg, let's fa' to work upon this green,
This shining day will bleach our linen clean:
The waters clear, the lift unclouded blue,
Will make them *like a lily wet wi' dew.*

PEGGY.

Gae far'er up the burn to Habbie's How,
Where a' the sweets o' spring and simmer grow;
There 'tween twa birks, out ower a little lin,
The water fa's, and maks a singin' din;
A pool breast-deep, beneath as clear as glass,
Kisses, wi' easy whirls, the bordering grass,
We'll end our washing while the morning's cool,
And when the day grows het, we'll to the pool,
There wash oursells; 'tis healthfu' now in May,
And sweetly cauler on sae warm a day.'

"This is an out-door picture. Here is an in-door one quite as good—nay, better.

'*While Peggy laces up her bosom fair,*
With a blue snood Jenny binds up her hair;
Glaud by his morning ingle takes a beek;
The rising sun shines motty through the reek;
A pipe his mouth, the lasses please his een,
And now and then his joke maun intervene.'

"We would quote, if we could—only it might not look so proper, when isolated—the whole song at the close of Act the Second. The first line of it alone is worth all Pope's pastorals put together, and (we were going to add) half of those of Virgil; but we reverence too much the great follower of the Greeks, and true lover of the country. There is more sentiment, and equal nature, in the song at the end of Act the Fourth. Peggy is taking leave of her lover, who is going abroad:—

'At setting day and rising morn
Wi' saul that still shall love thee,
I'll ask o' Heaven thy safe return,
Wi' a' that can improve thee.
I'll visit aft the birkin bush,
Where first thou kindly tauld me

Sweet tales of love, *and hid my blush,*
Whilst round thou did'st infald me.

'To a' our haunts I will repair,
To greenwood, shaw, or fountain;
Or where the summer day I'd share
Wi' thee upon yon mountain.
There will I tell the trees and flowers
Frae thoughts unfeign'd and tender,
By vows you're mine, *by love* is yours
A heart that cannot wander.'

"The charming and so (to speak) natural flattery of the loving delicacy of this distinction—

'*By vows* you're mine, *by love* is yours,'

was never surpassed by a passion the most refined. It reminds us of a like passage in the anonymous words (Shakspeare might have written them) of the fine old English madrigal by Ford, 'Since first I saw your face.' Perhaps Ford himself wrote them; for the author of that music had sentiment enough in him for anything. The passage we allude to is—

'What, I that *loved*, and you that *liked*,
Shall *we* begin to wrangle?'

The highest refinement of the heart, though too rare in most classes, is luckily to be found in all; and hence it is, that certain meetings of extremes in lovers of different ranks in life are not always to be attributed either to a failure of taste on the one side, or unsuitable pretensions on the other. Scottish dukes have been known to meet with real Gentle-Shepherd heroines; and everybody knows the story of a lowly Countess of Exeter, who was too sensitive to survive the disclosure of the rank to which her lover had raised her." (1)

(1) A Jar of Honey from Mount Hybla, by L. Hunt, p. 106. London, 1848.

"The admirers of the Gentle Shepherd," says the author of the Pleasures of Hope, "must perhaps be contented to share some suspicion of national partiality, while they do justice to their own feeling of its merit. Yet as this drama is a picture of rustic Scotland, it would perhaps be saying little for its fidelity, if it yielded no more agreeableness to the breast of a native than he could expound to a stranger by the strict letter of criticism. We should think the painter had finished the likeness of a mother very indifferently, if it did not bring home to her children traits of undefinable expression which had escaped every eye but that of familiar affection. Ramsay had not the force of Burns, but, neither, in just proportion to his merits, is he likely to be felt by an English reader. The fire of Burns' wit and passion glows through an obscure dialect by its confinement to short and concentrated bursts. The interest which Ramsay excites is spread over a long poem, delineating manners more than passions, and the mind must be at home both in the language and manners, to appreciate the skill and comic archness with which he has heightened the display of rustic character without giving it vulgarity, and refined the view of peasant life by situations of sweetness and tenderness, without departing in the least degree from its simplicity. The Gentle Shepherd stands quite apart from the general pastoral poetry of modern Europe. It has no satyrs, nor featureless simpletons, nor drowsy and still landscapes of nature, but distinct characters and amusing incidents. The principal shepherd never speaks out of consistency with the habits of a peasant, but he moves in that sphere with such a manly spirit, with so much cheerful sensibility to its humble joys, with maxims of life so rational and independent, and with an ascendency over his fellow swains so well maintained by his force of character, that if we could suppose the pacific scenes of

the drama to be suddenly changed into situations of trouble and danger, we should, in exact consistency with our former idea of him, expect him to become the leader of the peasants, and the Tell of his native hamlet. Nor is the character of his mistress less beautifully conceived. She is represented, like himself, as elevated, by a fortunate discovery, from obscure to opulent life, yet as equally capable of being the ornament of either. A Richardson or a D'Arblay, had they continued her history, might have heightened the portrait, but they would not have altered its outline. Like the poetry of Tasso and Ariosto, that of the Gentle Shepherd is engraven on the memory of its native country. Its verses have passed into proverbs, and it continues to be the delight and solace of the peasantry whom it describes."(1)

But the pleasure we experience in presenting to our readers the fascinating and truly poetic criticisms upon the work from the pens of two of our most eminent poets, must not be allowed to withdraw us from our purpose of ascertaining how far our ideas as to its unsuitableness for the stage is borne out by the "opinions of authors." We conclude by an extract from the earliest biography of Ramsay we have met with, written by a party who adopts the signature of "Philo-Scoticus," and inserted in the Scots Magazine for 1797.(2) Although the writer has fallen into error in many points, yet his testimony as to the difficulty of doing it justice in the representation may be taken as that of a competent judge and eye-witness at that period.

"Few works have undergone publication more frequently than the Gentle Shepherd. It is also popular on the Scottish stage, but there, as well as on the English stage, where it appeared in 1781, it is almost impossible

(1) Campbell's British Poetry, vol. V., pp. 344—346.
(2) Scots Magazine for Feb. 1797, p. 76.

to collect a set of performers capable of doing justice to the language; and in England it has been found as difficult to collect an audience capable of understanding it when properly spoken. For these reasons the chief pleasure it affords has been in the closet, and that reader has little taste, and less knowledge of poetry, who does not relish its simple beauties."

VI. LETTERS OF ALLAN RAMSAY.

The first of the following letters was published by Mr. R. Chambers in his Lives of Illustrious Scotsmen, which appeared about 1832. In ignorance of that fact, it was again given along with the second and third in the Church of England Journal of April 14th, 1849, and represented as there given for the first time. They were then stated to be in possession of the Rev. John Marshall.(1) We have since seen part of a letter from that gentleman, in which he says, "I am not in possession of the *original* letters of Allan Ramsay. The originals were lent to me about 24 years ago by Mr. Scales, an S.S.C. in Edinburgh, who married a lady in Lanarkshire. Whether Mr. Scales is now alive I do not know."

I.

To William Ramsay of Templehill, Esq.

Edinburgh, *April* 8, 1724.

Sir,—These come to bear you my very heartfelt and grateful wishes. May you long enjoy your Marlefield, see many a returning spring pregnant with new beauties; may everything that's excellent in its kind continue to

(1) The Rev. Mr Marshall was formerly minister of the Episcopal Church of Blairgowrie. He resides now at Burnside house, near Forfar, without a charge.

fill your extended soul with pleasure. Rejoice in the beneficence of heaven, *and let all about ye rejoice;* whilst we, alake, the laborious insects of a smoaky city hurry about from place to place in one eternal maze of fatiguing cares to secure this day our daylie bread—and some thing till't. For me, I have almost forgot how springs gush from the earth. Once I had a notion how fragrant the fields were after a soft shower; and often, time out of mind! the flowery blushes of the morning have fired my breast with raptures. Then it was that the mixture of rural musick echoed agreeable from the surrounding hills, and all nature appeared in gayety.

However, what is wanting to me of rural sweets, I endeavour to make up by being continually at the acting of some new farce, for I'm grown, I know not how, so very wise, or at least think so, (which is much about one,) that the mob of mankind afford me a continual diversion, and this place, the citie, is crowded with Merry Andrews; fools and fops of all sizes, intermix'd with a few that can think, and compose the comical medley of actors.

Receive a sang made on the marriage of my young chief.(1) I am this vacation going through with a dramatic pastoral, which I design to carry the length of 5 Acts, in verse a' the gate, and if I succeed according to my plan, I hope to cope with the authors of Pastor Fido and Aminta. God take care of you and yours, the constant prayer of, Sir, your faithful humble servant,

ALLAN RAMSAY.

(1) A pastoral epithalamium on the happy marriage of Lord George Ramsay and Lady Jean Maule, vol. ii. p. 195.

II.

To Mrs. Sleigh, on her daughter, afterwards married to Alexander Brodie of Brodie, Lord Lyon.

Edinburgh, *July 7th*, 1724.

Madam,—A gratefull acknowledgement and endeavour after merit is my duty to your ladyship and your beautifull charge. Mrs. Dunbar has told me, and that with a golden testimony, that my well-being is not only the care of your ladyship's good wishes, but also of your beneficent actions. I glory in being regarded by such a good judge, and think it unmannerly to deny myself the pleasure of thinking that I am not without desert, since it is your ladyship's opinion.

The best tell me, that in nothing have I succeeded better, than in that epigram on Mrs. Mary; but how soon had it been lost in disregard, if the application had not been perfectly just, which all know that have the happiness to be acquainted with the most deserving subject.

Beauty, and comely shape, adorned with art,
Allure the fancy and enchant the eye:
But only wisdom can engage the heart,
And animate a love can never die.
Then happy he who gains the lovely Sleigh,
In whom he'll every charm of beauty find,
Who can to constancy her lover tye,
With all the shining virtues of her mind.

Thus, Madam, you may observe that beauty and wisdom ever unite, when the ideas of your admirable daughter warm the imagination of her poet. May she be long blest with your valuable counsel, and soon with an agreeable mate, are the hearty wishes of, Madam, your ladyship's most obliged humble servant,

Allan Ramsay.

P. S. Tho' I have not been idle, yet I have printed but these few that I send your ladyship,—in anything wherein I can serve, please let me know.

EPIGRAM

ON A MOST ACCOMPLISHED YOUNG LADY, MRS. MARY SLEIGH.

M inerva, wand'ring in a myrtle grove,
A ccosted thus the smiling Queen of Love,
"R evenge yourself, you've cause to be afraid,
Y our boasted power yields to a British maid.
S he seems a goddess,—all her graces shine,
L ove gives her beauty which eclipses thine."
"E ach youth, I know," says Venus, "thinks she's me,
I mmediately she speaks—they think she's thee.
G ood Pallas, thus ye're foiled as well as me!
"H a! ha!" cried Cupid, "that's my Mally Sleigh."

A. R.

III.

To Alexander Brodie of Brodie, Lord Lyon.

Edinburgh, *Feb.* 11*th*, 1727.

Sir,—May your health be confirmed, your days long, and all your hopes and wishes successful. Busy am I, in collecting, adjusting, and putting in order, all my last seven years labours, pastorals, tales, epigrams, marriage-songs, &c. to make them appear gracefully in a 2d quarto volume according to proposals. Wish me well for this once more, and make me happy. I design to have it finished against next winter, and with it to wait on my patrons in London. Hook in as many as ye can for me, and allow one of your servants to note me down their names and designations, and listen to my gratitude, if ever the lyon's errand can come to the mouse's gate. By all means, you and my dear Lord Advocate maun get consent from Sir Robert Walpool, that I may mark him in my list. In my next I shall give you a list of such as

I would have you to demand consent of.—Sir, your most humble, and ever devoted servant,

ALLAN RAMSAY.

I take the liberty, (which I know you'll have goodness to excuse,) to send you up 12 signed receipts to dispose of for me if it fall in your way.

The following curious letter has hitherto been printed from the copy in the Gentleman's Magazine for September 1784, which has been universally assumed as the date of its first publication. We are enabled to give it in a more complete and correct form, as it *first* appeared in the Scots Magazine for *August* of that year. We also copy at foot the letter of the party, by whom it was transmitted to the Editor.(1) It is curious to notice that Mr. Greenwood, the writer, has as much in view, by its publition, to preserve materials for a memoir of the son as to illustrate the life of the father.

IV.

TO MR. JOHN SMIBERT, IN BOSTON, NEW ENGLAND.

EDINBURGH, *May* 10*th*, 1736.

MY DEAR OLD FRIEND,—*Your health and happiness are ever ane addition to my satisfaction.* God make your life ever easy and pleasant! Half a century of years have now row'd o'er my pow; yes, row'd o'er my pow, that

(1) "SIR,—The papers having mentioned the death of Allan Ramsay, Esq., portrait painter to his Majesty, it put me in mind of a letter in my possession, which was written by his father, *the famous Scotch bard*, to Mr. John Smibert, a portrait painter, who left England with Dean Berkley, afterwards Bishop of Cloyne, to settle in Bermudas. That project miscarrying, Mr. Smibert went to Boston, married, and died. As the letter gives some account of Mr. Ramsay, in his youth, it may serve to illustrate any future anecdotes of English artists, and not to be unacceptable to both painters and poets. I am, &c.

JOHN GREENWOOD."

LEICESTER SQUARE, *Aug.* 24, 1784.

begins now to be lyart; yet, thanks to my Author! I eat, drink, and sleep as sound as I did twenty years syne: yes, I laugh heartily too, and find as many subjects to employ that faculty upon as ever; fools, fops, and knaves, grow as rank as formerly, yet here and there are to be found good and worthy men, who are an honour to human life. We have small hopes of seeing you again in our old world; *then let us be virtuous, and hope to meet in heaven.*—My good auld wife is still my bed-fellow. My son Allan has been pursuing your science since he was a dozen years auld; was with Mr. Hyssing at London for some time, about two years ago; has been since at home painting here like a Raphael; sets out for the seat of the beast beyond the Alps, within a month hence; to be away about two years. I'm sweer to part with him, but canna stem the current, which flows from the advice of his patrons and his own inclination. I have three daughters; one of seventeen, one of sixteen, and one of twelve years old; and no ae wally dragle amang them; all fine girls. These six or seven years past, I have not wrote a line of poetry. I e'en gave over in good time, before the coolness of fancy that attends advanced years, should make me risk the reputation I had acquired.

> "Frae twenty-five to five and forty,
> My Muse was neither sweer nor dorty;
> My Pegasus wad break his tether,
> E'en at the shagging of a feather,
> And throw ideas scour like drift,
> Streaking his wings up to the lift;
> Then, then, my soul was in a low
> That gart my numbers safely row:
> But eild and judgment 'gin to say,
> *Let be your sangs, and learn to pray.*"

"It is scarcely possible to conceive," says R. Chambers in his neat biography of our Poet in Lives of Illustrious

Scotsmen, "a more pleasing picture of ease and satisfaction than is exhibited in the above sketch; and, the affair of the theatre in Carrubber's close excepted, Ramsay seems to have filled it up to the last." In connection with this pleasing picture we may here copy his concluding determination—for it was written within little more than a year of his death—upon his past and present, from his Epistle to James Clerk, Esq., of Pennicuick, written in the year 1755,—"a picture of himself," says the above writer, "more graphic than could have been drawn by any other person."

"Tho' born to not ae inch of ground,
I keep my conscience white and sound;
And tho' I ne'er was a rich heaper,
To make that up I live the cheaper;
By this ae knack I 've made a shift
To drive ambitious care a-drift;
And now in years and sense grown auld,
In ease I like my limbs to fauld.
Debts I abhor, and plan to be
Frae *shochling* (1) trade and danger free,
That I may, loos'd frae care and strife,
With calmness view the edge of life;
And when a full ripe age shall crave,
Slide easily into my grave.
Now seventy years are o'er my head,
And thirty mae may lay me dead."

The practice of composing epigrams on individuals, the lines of which commenced with the letters in succession of their name, seems to have obtained about this time. Mr. R. Chambers mentions having heard, so late

(1) Through inadvertence, or perhaps an error of the printer, in Mr. Chambers' quotation of this interesting passage, this line is printed,

From *shacklin* trade and dangers free,

which has a meaning the very opposite to Ramsay's. It is worthy of notice how appropriate and full of meaning is every *vernacular* word used by this great master of the Scottish language.

as in the year 1823, an extremely aged but hale lady, the widow of a citizen of Montrose, recite a poem of this kind written by Beattie—to whom she had been engaged in honourable affection—in her praise. In the case of that upon Miss Mary Sleigh (p. 246), and accompanying letter, now printed for the first time, it is pleasing to notice, how greatly the poet's feelings and disinterested admiration of their subject prompted to the composition. That this is the case with all or nearly all his odes, monodies, and laudatory verses, a rigorous examination of the poet's character, sympathies, and intercourse with the parties, might be made to exhibit. He had an unbounded love for the good, the beautiful, and the great in nature, and in man or woman, and an unaffected warmth in all his friendships. It would not perhaps have been necessary to refer to this, were it not that Ramsay has been represented as writing elegiac poems and panegyrics with a view to gain the notice and patronage of influential individuals, if not for still more sordid objects.(1) The

(1) "He is one of the few poets who have thriven by poetry—who could combine poetic habits with those of ordinary business; nor can any name in literature be quoted, which may better serve to point the moral, that prudence is the way to wealth. Even at those periods of his life, when he might be supposed to be absorbed by literary labour, he never failed to bestow due attention on that unpoetical, but more surely productive object, the shop. His very poetry, indeed, Ramsay made a matter of business. Of this, the systematic discrimination with which he lavished his praises, and the skill with which, though really a man of strong party feelings, he contrived to steer through life, without incurring the dislike of any party, afford ample proof. Nor was Ramsay slow to avow the worldly wisdom which regulated the inspirations of his muse; as may be seen in his Answer to an Epistle on the Poverty of Poets, which begins with the following question:

Dear Allan, with your leave allow me
To ask you but one question, civil,
Why thou'rt a poet, pray thee, shew me,
And not as poor as any devil?

His answer overflows with sincerity:

That many a thriftless poet 's poor
Is what they very weel deserve,

objects of his praises have disappeared from the scene, and their merit and fascinations have passed into oblivion; but we are not therefore warranted in assuming such excellencies as he ascribes to them did not exist.

VII. THE POSTHUMOUS REPUTATION OF RAMSAY AND ITS ASSAILANTS.

The success which accompanied Ramsay through life, as well in literature as in trade, did not secure for him a permanent or an unsullied reputation after his death. "He had experienced a felicity reserved for few individuals: by the vigour of mental exertion he had gradually raised himself from his original obscurity, and had found himself capable of securing the reputation which attached itself to his name."(1) "He had risen to wealth and high respectability,(2) numbering among his familiar

'Cause aft their muse turns common —
And flatters fools that let them starve.

That Ramsay's poetry gained any thing by this wondrous degree of discretion, it would be difficult to affirm."—*Lives of Eminent Scotsmen.* London. 1821. Part I. p. 105.

This is too bad. Ramsay's own language is, by quoting only a part of his answer, and giving to that a false interpretation, made to convict him of the charge. See page 108. Ramsay says, the bad success of most poets is attributable to the prostitution of their pens to flatter unworthy objects. Stanza 1st; and to their idleness. S. 2. He advises them rather to toil at the hod than to panegyrise unworthy objects. S. 3. He recommends to them economy, cheerfulness, and industry. S. 4. He describes his own determination to keep out of debt by observing these precepts. And he adds—

Lucky for me I never sang
Fause praises to a worthless wight;
And still took pleasure in the thrang
Of them wha in good sense delights.

(1) Irving's Life, p. 318.

(2) He was selected, and says Irving (Life, p. 326) with sufficient propriety, as a pleasing exemplification of the Poet's fate.

"But things may mend, and poets yet may hope
In better times to charm and thrive like Pope,
Or Allan Ramsay, that harmonious Scot:
Now to fare ill is but the poet's lot."

friends the best and the wisest men in the nation. By the greater part of the Scottish nobility he was caressed, and at the houses of some of the most distinguished of them, Hamilton palace, Loudon castle, &c., was a frequent visitor. With Duncan Forbes, lord advocate, afterwards lord president, and the first of Scottish patriots, Sir John Clerk, Sir William Bennett, and Sir Alexander Dick, he lived in the habit of daily and familiar, and friendly intercourse."(1) He was generally regarded as a man whose genius reflected honour on his native country. He was one of the few poets to whom poetry was really a blessing, at once a source of pleasure and pecuniary advantage, and who could combine poetic pursuits with those of ordinary business. Although like his more illustrious successor, Sir Walter Scott, his generosity of disposition exhibited itself towards contemporary poets in kindly intercourse, in friendly offices and in poetic salutations, and his ready pen poured out disinterested and touching lamentations over the deaths of Prior(2)

(1) Chambers' Lives of Illustrious Scotsmen.

(2) We presume it is to the Pastoral upon the death of Prior that Dr. Irving refers when he says, (Life, p. 317) 'One of his Pastorals has been reprinted in London, with a recommendatory preface, by Dr. Sewel.' At least we know of no other—except that upon the death of Addison, which it was not—to which it is so likely to apply. The following lines will show the fine taste and moral feeling of Ramsay, and the happy faculty he possessed of recommending serious subjects as well as merry ones to the homeliest of his countrymen. Would he had given us more of such.

"And when he had a mind to be mair grave,
A minister nae better could behave.
Far out of sight of sic he aften flew,
When he of haly wonders took a view;
Well cou'd he praise the Power that made us a',
And bids us in return but tent his law;
Wha guides us when we're waking or asleep,
With thousand times mair care than we our sheep.
While he of pleasure, power, and wisdom sang,
My heart lap high, my lugs wi' pleasure rang:
These to repeat braid spoken I wad spill,
Altho' I should employ my utmost skill.
He tow'rd aboon! But ah! what tongue can tell
How high he flew? how much lamented fell?"

and of Addison,(1) yet, on the occasion of his own death, say nearly all his biographers, there was not found so

(1) The pastoral on the death of Addison may be regarded as not the least happy of his efforts. The very name is pastoral:

"Adie, that played and sang sae sweet."

Keeping up with perfect consistency the idea of the mourned one being a sage and tuneful yet still a rural swain, with what felicity and simplicity does he make the imaginary rustics refer to his papers in the Spectator on the immortality of the soul?

"Kindly he'd laugh when sae he saw me dwine,
And talk of happiness like a divine,"

or to his exquisite criticism in the same work upon the Paradise Lost of Milton:

"Blind John, ye mind, wha sang wi' kittle phrase
How the ill sp'rit did the first mischief raise;
Mony a time, beneath the auld birk tree
What's bonny in that sang, he loot me see."

No wonder 'Sweet Adie's funeral sang' was

"By Luckie Reid and Ballat singers"

surreptitiously published and hawked about in Scotland, although "being" (as he complains in Address to the Town Council, vol, i. p. 176) "on ugly paper and full of errors."

"They spoiled his sense, and staw his cash
His muse's pride murgully'd;"—

no wonder that in England too, although by many inaccuracies,

"Sae sair it had been knoited;—

His gleg eyed friends, through the disguise,
Received it as a dainty prize
For a' it was sae hav'ren;
Gart Linton tak it to his press,
And clead it in a braw new dress,
Syne took it to the Tavern;"

or that his friend Mr. Burchell, for Ramsay's sake, enabled the typographer, from a correct version, to reprint a second impression of it. It has been well remarked, by a writer in a periodical of a respectable and religious character, (Hogg's Weekly Instructor, Dec. 5th, 1845,) "that it was those frequent allusions to the classical writers and poets of his day that made Ramsay's own pieces so serviceable to the common people." The same writer further remarks,—that "the enlightenment of the then grovelling illiterate masses of Scotland, had been, from the outset, a grand project in his mind. By his exertions the literary torpor which had distinguished the common orders of his country for upwards of a century was broken in upon and disturbed." By the "tens of thousands of copies of his publications which he issued forth himself, in addition to those circulated by means of piracy, he was imparting to the masses of Caledonia, not merely a thirst for his own writings, but

much as one poet in Scotland to sing a requiem over his grave. "With him," says Chambers, "was buried for a time Scottish poetry."

To account for this apathetic ingratitude—even had these statements been correct—would not be difficult. The impulse given to his fellow countrymen about this epoch towards an increased acquaintance with English literature—and to which his compositions and the establishment of his own and afterwards other circulating libraries in Scotland largely contributed—led them to seek its gratification at the fountain head, and the language and authors of the neighbouring kingdom received therefore a degree of attention never previously accorded to them by the masses of Scotsmen. Scotch writers not being able to command attention in their own tongue, nor—at that period—to protect themselves from piratical publications in the neighbouring kingdoms, betook themselves to England at once for improvement, fame, and profit. Meston was dead. Meikle—resident in Edinburgh—was then only twenty-four years old, entangled with the cares of a brewery, of which even at that early age he had undertaken the proprietorship, and his poetic powers all but undeveloped until long afterward. Mallet had been upwards of thirty years in England, had disgraced his reputation and prostituted his pen, and was not likely to remember, or care for the memory of, his former friend. Thomson had died ten years before. Black-

an anxious desire to get possession of the works of the many eminent poets and essayists whom, in almost all his productions, he made a point of extolling." He saw, he must have seen, that "a new era was taking place in the literature of Scotland, which acknowledging none but himself for its author, must, even though all the productions of his pen had been forgotten, have carried down his name to the most remote posterity, and that by consequence, if that name perished, it could only be with the history of his country." Towards that enlightenment what could be more conducive, than to put into the hands of the peasants and boors of Scotland those happy references to the most elegant and noblest of the compositions of Addison and Milton.

lock, to whom his compositions had afforded so great delight in his youth, was undergoing trials for license as a clergyman of the Church of Scotland. The agitation connected with the representation of his tragedy of Douglas, had only a few months previously driven Home from his pastoral office and from Scotland. Ramsay had passed the last twenty-eight years of his life without publishing a line of poetry. A new generation of writers had arisen in Scotland. The ecclesiastical spirit was strong, and engaged the public attention. The unpopularity of the party that had but recently expelled Gillespie, and all but driven out Boston, from the national church, sought to compensate for these acts by putting Episcopalian nonjurors in prison, and by consenting to the expulsion from their order of the author of the Tragedy of Douglas.

The Jacobite party, to which all the predilections of Ramsay leant, were, after the field of Culloden, totally prostrated by the now triumphant friends of the House of Brunswick. It was not forgotten that he had been the intimate friend of some, and the panegyrist of others, of that party. But Ramsay was not altogether forgotten. In a Postscript to their issue, for Dec. 1757, the proprietors of the Scots Magazine, then the leading periodical of the kingdom, announced his death ; and in the next monthly publication appeared some lines to his memory, of which the authorship has never been ascertained, and indeed the existence had been forgotten. The following circumstances may, perhaps, throw some light upon the matter.

About the year 1756, Dr. Beattie, the author of the Minstrel, then holding the humble situation of schoolmaster in the parish of Fordoun in Kincardineshire, having, in the total want of society in that neighbourhood, devoted himself to study and poetry, commenced sending

his smaller compositions to that journal, of which many appeared in that and the two following years. He is described by his biographers as at this period of his life delighting to saunter in the fields, for entire nights, contemplating the sky, and marking the approach of day. A deep and extensive glen, finely clothed with wood, at a small distance from his residence, and running up into the mountains, was his frequent resort; and there many of these pieces were written. "As from the life he drew in this wild and romantic spot," they inform us, "some of the finest landscapes, and most beautiful descriptions of nature, that occur in his subsequent poetic compositions." It is related of him also, that on one occasion having lain down early on the bank of his favourite rivulet, adjoining to his mother's house, he had fallen asleep; on awakening, it was not without astonishment that he found he had been walking in his sleep, and that he was then a mile and a half distant from the place where he had lain down.

How far these details may connect Beattie with the scenery and the occupations described in the following lines, the reader will judge for himself. As will as several others of these contributions to the Scots Magazine, it was not republished (if composed by him) when he, about two years afterwards, appeared as an author for the first time; and not bearing the usual designation(1) of the others, it may have escaped the notice of his biographers. Although of no very high poetic merit, we should rejoice to know that this simple garland of grief was thrown over the then fresh grave of Ramsay, by one who so much admired his genius in the works he avowed, and

(1) These contributions were marked K—c—d—sh—e, F—d—n, or Aberdeen; but at the period in question he was about to remove to the latter place, in the high school of which he had obtained an appointment, and may have then been actually resident in Edinburgh.

who discovered his poetic merit in those where he appeared under a mask.(1)

To the Memory of Allan Ramsay.

Hard by the grassy margin of a stream,
Where zephyrs played, to cool the sultry beam,
Shedding the odours, from their fanning wings,
Of ev'ry fragrance-breathing sweet that springs,
A shepherd lay, stretch'd on the verdant ground,
With rows of lofty elms encompass'd round;
Whose leafy umbrage, mantling as it grew,
Hid the clear azure concave from the view.
Pure was his bosom as the stream that flowed,
Or eastern gale that o'er its surface blowed;
His temper softer than the op'ning flower,
That spreads its folds to catch the evening-shower;
Pleased and contented with his humble lot,
His thoughts ne'er soar'd above the crook and cot;
The rosy glow that stain'd his cheek, outvy'd
The tulip's blush, by nature's pencil dyed;
While the fleet hours, on pinions made of down,
(Unenvy'd all the glories of a crown,)
Stole sweetly silent unperceived away;
Which oft for him seem'd to prolong their stay.
Here would he gently swell the mellow reed,
Bathe in the flood, or view his lambkins feed;
Make every echo vocal with his song,
Or gently trip th' enamell'd vale along;
Select the finest flow'rets from the rest,
To grace some rural fair-one's snowy breast.
Or when Aurora, on the spangled ground,
Scatters the orient pearl all around;
Or when the sun, from fields of azure blue,
Bids, with a blush, the wond'ring world adieu;
Oft would he pore upon some fav'rite book,
With smiles of cheerful joy in every look;

(1) In allusion to the 'Vision,' of which Beattie was the first to discover the high poetic merit, although, as has been explained, he attributed it to one Scot. The Vision was published in the Evergreen under the signature Ar. Scot.

But chiefly such, where mirth and wit conspire
To raise the laugh, warm'd by the Muse's fire:
Where innocence, where artless nature shines,
And simple elegance adorns the lines;
No empty awkward pageantry of phrase;
Just, RAMSAY, such as thy mellifluous lays!
Where Love and Music court the list'ning ear,
And ev'ry gentle lenitive for care;
Where equal sweetness, equal softness dwell,
As in those objects you describe so well!
Not the pure honey from the waxen dome,
Sipt by the bees as thro' the fields they roam;
Not the mild whispers of the southern breeze,
While it in plaints steals thro' the sighing trees;
Not the melodious accents of the grove,
Where linnets, nightingales, and blackbirds rove;
Not the clear stream, which from the rock distils,
With murm'ring cadence, trickling down in rills;
Nor all the heighten'd beauties of the year;
With more attractive genuine charms appear!
Above the rest, the GENTLE SHEPHERD charm'd,
That matchless piece! by real genius form'd,
To move the tend'rest feelings of the heart,
By simple nature's unaffected art.
Each conscious thought a secret rapture felt,
And oft to softness all his soul would melt:
When PATIE and when PEGGY met to woo,
So strong the paint, they seem'd confess'd to view;
Each rolling eye, on one another turn'd,
Reveal'd the fires that in their bosom burned;
Seem'd to describe, what language tries in vain,
Their inward transports—and their inward pain.
Oft to some oak would he his speech address,
In equal warmth his passion to express;
(Such power have fine descriptions on the mind,
And such in every page of it we find),
And still as oft as breezes fann'd the leaves,
Fondly concludes an answer he receives;
Till conquer'd by imaginary charms,
About the trunk he clasps his eager arms,
And, ere his eyes the strange mistake can see,
Imprints keen kisses on the lifeless tree.

Once, as he sat beneath an aged thorn,
Bright with the dewy globules of the morn;
Gazing with rapture on the eastern sky,
Ruddy all o'er with crimson's deepest dye;
Or list'ning to the blackbird's varying lay,
Or tuneful thrush, perch'd on the flowery spray;
While solemn stillness hush'd the silent world,
Save where a murm'ring riv'let gently purl'd;
A sudden change attracts his wondering eye,
Thick clouds extending o'er the smiling sky;
Unusual gloom and sadness all around,
Where ev'ry scene of joy before was found;
Soft soothing Music's sweetly warbled strain
Charming no more, and gladdening all the plain.
While strange surmises all his mind possess,
And various reasons offer to his guess;
A swain he spies, dissolved in floods of grief,
With rueful look despairing of relief;
Lively concern sat pictured in his face,
Which conquer'd every gay and sprightly grace;
And as his view took in the landscape round,
Increased the more his sorrow still was found.
Touched with the melting sympathy of woe,
Yet apprehensive, and afraid to know,
Near him with trembling steps the shepherd draws,
Anxious to know the melancholy cause.
But all the answer his vast grief affords,
(For genuine sorrow is too great for words,)
These mournful, these pathetic words exprest,
RAMSAY IS DEAD!—his silence told the rest.

CLEANTHES.

A few months after the foregoing verses were written, an old man was to be seen in Aberdeen superintending the publication by subscription of a volume of his poetry, written in the northern or Buchan dialect of the Scottish language. The pieces of which that volume consisted had been selected from amongst his other compositions by the young enthusiast Beattie of whose father the aged writer had been an esteemed friend.

Alexander Ross had for thirty-six years filled the humble office of schoolmaster in the wild and romantic parish of Lochlee, at the head of the valley of the North Esk, and in the very centre of the Grampians. On a salary not exceeding twenty pounds a-year, and the profits of a small glebe, he enjoyed in this lonely glen—for it was no more—an amount of personal and domestic happiness, not inferior, says his descendant, to that of any person in his station, or indeed in any station. At nearly seventy years of age, he was now about to appear for the first time before the public as an author. From his early youth, he, although a good classical scholar, had conceived an attachment to the Scottish language, as more expressive and poetical than the English,—an attachment which the writings of Ramsay confirmed and gratified. Whilst to thousands of his countrymen in these remote and pastoral glens, the 'Gentle Shepherd' had been a source of instruction and delight, to him it was more. It became the subject of his study, and the incentive to his genius. To amuse his solitary hours he had composed verses and songs, some of the latter he had had the gratification of hearing chanted by his neighbours on the hillside or at the ingle cheek. He now read over the pastoral of Ramsay, as he said, a hundred times, each time discovering new beauties in it. The result was the composition of 'The Fortunate Shepherdess,' a work in which the ancient dialect and an account of the simple manners of the north are introduced into and incorporated with our national literature, and which disputes popularity, amongst the simple and pious natives of these regions, with Burns and the Pilgrim's Progress.

It would have been singular, if a work composed under such influences should have made no mention of him to whose inspiration and example it owed its appearance. At what time the invocation, with which it commences,

was written, there is no means of ascertaining. It may have been after the Poem itself had been selected by Beattie as deserving of publication. In this case Ross would have been aware of the death of his predecessor. In the verses written by Beattie, which appeared shortly afterwards, the death of Ramsay is referred to as a well-known fact. There is nothing in the lines which imply that Ross supposed Ramsay to be still alive.

The point is of little importance. The following, however, is the strain in which the modest poet of Lochlee, in his own name, and in that of the Muse of his country, refers to his predecessor and exemplar.

Come, Scota, thou that anes upon a day
Gar'd Allan Ramsay's hungry heart-strings play
The merriest sangs that ever yet were sung,
Pity anes mair, for I'm outthrow as clung.(1)
'Twas that grim gossip, chandler-chafted(2) want,
With threed-bare claithing, and an ambry scant,
Made him cry o' thee, to blaw throw his pen,
Wi' leed,(3) that well might help him to come ben,
And crack amo' the best of ilka sex,
And shape his houghs to gentle bows and becks.
He wan thy heart, well wordy o't, poor man,
Take ye another gangrell(4) by the han';
As gryt's my mister, and my duds as bair,(5)
And I as sib as he was,(6) ilka hair.
Mak me but half as canny,(7) there's no fear,
Though I be auld, but I'll yet gather gear.(8)

(1) Entirely, as if exhausted or empty. In allusion to the stomach, which shrivels up, or clings together when one has fasted long.
(2) Lantern-jawed; having jaws like a chandler, or candlestick.
(3) Language; also, verse, song; here probably the latter.
(4) One who goes irregularly; a child beginning to walk; it seems here to denote a novice.
(5) *Mister;* need, occasion; *duds;* ordinary or inferior dress.
As gryt's my mister, and my duds as bair,
My necessity is as great, my furnishing as poor.
(6) As nearly related as he was; both being Scotsmen.
(7) *Canny.* Jamieson has it, easy, snug. It appears here to imply skilful.
(8) Ross's biographers have found it rather difficult to reconcile the description given of himself above, with his contentment and comfort.

O gin thou hadst not heard him first o'erwell,
When he got maughts (1) to write 'The Shepherd's Tale;'
I meith(2) ha had some chance of landing fair;
But O, that sang's the mither of my care(3)
What wad I geen, that thou hadst put thy thumb
Upo' the well-tauld tale, till I had come;
Then led my hand alongst it line for line;
O, to my dieing day, how I wad shine;
And as far yont it, as syn HABBIE plaid,
Or GA'IN on VIRGIL matchless skill display'd:
And mair I wadna wiss. *But* RAMSAY *bears*
The gree himsel, and the green laurels wears;
Well mat he brook them, for tho' ye had spair'd
The task to me, PATE *meith na been a laird:*(4)
'Tis maybe better, I'll take fat ye gee,
Ye're nae toom-handed gin your heart be free:
But I'll be willing gin ye bid me write,
Blind horse, they say, ride hardly to the fight;
And by good hap, may come again, but scorn,
They are no kempers(5) a' that shear the corn.
Then SCOTA heard, and said, 'Your rough-spun ware
Sounds but right douff and fowsome to my ear;—
Do ye pretend to write like my ain bairn,
Or onie ane that wins beyont the Kairn?(6)
Ye're far mistaen gin ge think sic a thought,
The Gentle Shepherd's nae sae easy wrought;
There's scenes and acts, there's drift, and there's design,
And a' maun like a new-ground whittle shine;
Sic wimpl'd wark would crack a pow like thine.'

It is probable the language is figurative throughout, and the destitution referred to is poetic not pecuniary. As Ramsay, by cultivating the *Scots* muse, raised himself from obscurity and scantiness of fame,

'to come ben,
And crack amo' the best of ilka sex,

so Ross, though old, might yet acquire reputation, viz., gather gear

(1) Power, talents.

(2) Might.

(3) The source of my doubt and apprehension.

(4) I might not have managed the plot so well as to make him a laird.

(5) Champions, or contenders for superiority.

(6) Kairn, Cairn, or Carn-a-mounth; a lofty mountain in the Grampian range, celebrated in Scotch story and song, on account of the road which passes over it between the great districts of Angus and Moray. It is referred to in one of the epistles of Hamilton of Gilbertfield, and in the verses by Beattie. *Beyont the cairn,* means on the south side of the Grampians.

'Kind mistress,' says I, 'gin this be your fear,
Charge nae mair shot than what the piece 'll bear.
Something but scenes or acts, that kittle game,
Yet what may please, bid me sit down and frame.'

The verses of Beattie already referred to were sent to a local paper.(1) The following allusions to our author, and to the disposition then prevailing to look to English to the neglect of native literature, may be quoted here, as a further tribute by native poets to his memory, and in evidence of the existence of that anti-national spirit which was shortly thereafter to be directed against it. The verses of which they form a part are curious, as the only known composition of Beattie in the Scottish language, and are considered to possess some merit.

Since Allan's death, nae body car'd
For anes to speer how Scota far'd;
Nor plack(2) nor thristled turner(3) war'd
To quench her drouth;
For, frae the cottar to the laird,
We a' run south.

The Southland chiels indeed hae mettle,
And brawly at a sang can ettle;(4)
Yet we right couthily might settle(5)
On this side Forth.

(1) The Aberdeen Journal.

(2) A copper coin, value four pence Scotch, or one-third of a penny English.

(3) A copper coin—sometimes called bodle—value two pennies Scotch, —from the French *Tournois*, where the copper money was coined, or rather the mixture of copper and brass which took this name. *Thristled*, thistled, to distinguish from the French coin, which, by reason of the close friendship between the Scots and French, circulated in Scotland even so late as the reign of Louis XIV. The Scotch turner or tournois bore the national emblem of the thistle.

(4) Aim at, attempt.

(5) Comfortably settle.

The devil pay them with a pettle,(1)
That slight the north.

Our country leed is far frae barren,
'Tis even right pithy and auldfarran,
Oursells are neiper-like,(2) I warran,
For sense and smergh ;(3)
In kittle times, when faes are yarrin',(4)
We're no thought ergh.(5)

O bonny are our greensward hows,
Where through the birks the burney rows,
And the bee bums, and the ox lows,
And saft winds rusle,(6)
And shepherd lads, on sunny knows,
Blaw the blythe fusle.(7)

'Tis true, we norlands manna fa'
To eat sae nice, nor gang sa bra'
As they that come from far awa,'
Yet sma's our skaith ;
We've peace, (and that's well worth it a',)
And meat and claith.

Our fine new-fangle sparks, I grant ye,
Gie poor auld Scotland mony a taunty,
They're grown so ugertfu'(8) and vaunty,
And capernoited,(9)
They guide her like a canker'd aunty,
That's deaf and doited,

Sae comes of ignorance, I trow ;
'Tis this that crooks their ill-fa'r'd mou'

(1) The plough-stick, or stick with which the earth adhering to the plough is cleared away ; sometimes pattle.

"I would be laith to run and chase thee
Wi' murd'ring pattle."—*Burns.*

(2) Neighbour-like. (3) Smartness, mental vigour.
(4) Growling, snarling. (5) Timid, hesitating, afraid. (6) Rustle.
(7) Whistle, pipe of wind music instrument ; organs are sometimes called 'whistling kists.'
(8) Affectedly delicate, squeamish.
(9) Peevish, crabbed.

With jokes sae course, they gar foulk spew
For downright skonner;
For Scotland wants na sons enew
To do her honour.

I here might gie a skreed of names,
Dawties(1) of Heliconian dames!(2)
The foremost place GA'IN DOUGLASS claims,
That pawky priest.
And wha can match the first King James
For sang or jest?

MONTGOMERY grave, and RAMSAY gay,
DUNBAR, SCOTT,(3) HAWTHORNDEN, and mae
Than I can tell, for o' my fay
I maun brak aff;
'Twould take a live-lang summer day
To name the half.

Ross, in the introduction to his Gentle Shepherdess, makes a similar allusion to the tendency to neglect and stigmatize the use of the popular idiom. Speaking in the character of the Scots muse he says:

"Speak my ain leed, 'tis gueed(4) auld Scotch I mean,
Your southern gnaps(5) I count not worth a preen;(6)
We've words a fouth,(7) that we can ca' our ain,
Though frae them now my bairnies sair refrain.

It may be remarked here that a great improvement had taken place in Scotland, in every respect, since the beginning of the century. The extent of that improvement can only be estimated by carefully noting the in-

(1) Darlings. (2) The muses.
(3) It is added in a note here, "*Author of the Vision, a Poem.*" See note (1), page 257.
(4) Good.
(5) Knaps, clipped English. "James the Fyft . . . . hereing ane of his subjects knap Suddrone, declarit him ane trateur."—*Questionis to the Ministeris.*
(6) Pin. (7) Enough.

ternal condition of the kingdom at its commencement, and as it existed about the year 1760. The laudable endeavours of the leading characters of the day to stimulate industry and the arts cannot be too greatly commended.

Their zeal, however, sometimes led them in eagerness to introduce what was new and desirable, to undervalue and to endeavour to cast aside what was established and old. Amongst other matters, a praiseworthy desire to extend the use of the English language in its utmost purity and polish into Scotland, occupied the attention of the leaders of the public taste. So early as the year 1752, the celebrated David Hume made a collection of Scotticisms, or words to be avoided by Scotchmen, in which he was followed some years afterwards by Dr. Beattie himself. These were from time to time reprinted, and copied into periodicals. The taste of the reading portion of the nation was so far directed against the ancient idiom, that in order more effectually to abate its use, an association was formed in the year 1761 for the encouragement of teachers who should remove from England and commence their labours in Edinburgh, and several thousand pounds were subscribed for the attainment of this object.(1) And if a popular preacher about this time committed to

(1) *Regulations of the Select Society for promoting the Reading and Speaking of the English Language in Scotland.*

As the intercourse between this part of Great Britain and the capital daily increases, both on account of business and amusement, and must still go on increasing, gentlemen educated in Scotland have long been sensible of the disadvantages under which they labour, from their imperfect knowledge of the English tongue, and the impropriety with which they speak it.

Experience hath convinced Scotsmen, that it is not impossible for persons born and educated in this country, to acquire such knowledge of the English tongue, as to write it with some tolerable purity.

But with regard to the other point, that of speaking with propriety, as little has been hitherto attempted, it has generally been taken for granted, that there was no prospect of attempting anything with a probability of success; though, at the same time, it is allowed to be an ac-

the press a discourse in which an occasional Scottish word or phrase appeared, it was deemed a likely method of damaging him in the estimation of intelligent readers, to revile him for doing so in unmeasured terms.

"We think it incumbent on us to observe," says Professor Jardine in the Edinburgh Review for 1755, when noticing a sermon of Boston of Oxnam, "that there are some expressions and allusions in these sermons, which, however acceptable they may be to the *lowest* class of readers, yet to every person of judgment, and who has

complishment, more important, and more universally useful, than the former.

In other countries, great and beneficial effects have flowed from the regular study of their own languages, and the art of public speaking, under diligent and well-instructed masters. And, in proportion as the dialect of any province is corrupt or barbarous, the necessity of studying purity in speech increases.

Even persons well advanced in life may be taught, by skilful instructors, to avoid many gross improprieties, in quantity, accent, the manner of sounding the vowels, &c., which, at present, *render the Scotch dialect so offensive.*

Among those in a more early period of life, greater effects may be expected from regular instruction. It is in their power, not only to guard against the more gross faults in speech peculiar to Scotsmen, but to attain, in some degree, propriety and elegance in discourse.

Such as are just entering upon their course of education, whose organs are yet pliable, and capable of being formed to new sounds and new habits, may acquire the power of speaking, not only with purity, but with grace and eloquence.

For these reasons, the Select Society, at a very numerous meeting held in order to consider this matter, did unanimously declare it to be their opinion, that it would be of great advantage to this country, if a proper number of persons from England, duly qualified to instruct gentlemen in the knowledge of the English tongue, the manner of pronouncing it with purity, and the art of public speaking, were settled in Edinburgh: and if, at the same time, a proper number of masters from the same country, duly qualified for teaching children the reading of English, should open schools in Edinburgh for that purpose.

But being fully sensible, that there could be no prospect of procuring persons with the qualifications requisite for these stations, without giving them proper security for their encouragement and subsistence, the Society, in order to promote this laudable design by their example, did instantly begin a voluntary subscription, for raising the sum necessary towards carrying it into execution; and appointed some of their number to apply to the absent members, to other private gentlemen, and to most of the public bodies or societies in Scotland, that they might give it their countenance and assistance.—*Scots Magazine, August*, 1761, p. 440.

any regard for religion, they must appear to be mean and unworthy the dignity of the subject: e. g.—'tis no less than an attempt to *eik* and *patch* up that glorious robe—Satan *nibbling* at the heels—the soul's *minting* to depart—paying the *Dyvour's* debt. Such *vulgarisms* as these are indecent even in conversation, but much more so in a solemn discourse from the pulpit, on the most important article of our holy religion. What pity is it, that a minister of the Gospel, who has had the advantage (as we presume) of a regular education, should, in order to edify, we shall not say *please* the common people, descend to such meanness of expressions, and have recourse to such extravagant allusions, as must disgust every reader of taste, and even tend to expose religion itself to the ridicule and contempt of the wicked and profane." (1)

Lord Hailes, who is generally reputed a temperate writer, speaks of the idiom of Ramsay as 'the vulgar language spoken in the Lothians at this day.' (2) A few years after, Pinkerton, by no means a timid writer, apologises or professes to do so, for having edited poems in the Scottish language, and defends himself by drawing a distinction betwixt the ancient and the modern Scotch, and by arguing that his employment of the *ancient* orthography was—and if adopted in all the reprints of the earlier poets would be—an effectual method of extinguishing the living or *colloquial* idiom, as the peasantry being then unable to *command books written in it, would be forced to read English.*

"Perhaps some may say," is the language of Pinkerton

(1) Review for July 1755, p. 91. This *first* Edinburgh Review was established by Adam Smith, Robertson, and others, and contains their earliest printed writings. Jardine was also one of the ministers of Edinburgh, and a man of moderation and well-known piety. In consequence of this and other attacks, however, the Review was discontinued.

(2) Preface to ancient Scottish Poems, p. ix. Edinburgh, 1770.

in his preface to the Maitland poems, "the Scots themselves wish to abolish their dialect totally, and substitute the English; why then attempt to preserve the Scotish language? Let me answer that none can more sincerely wish a total extinction of the Scotish *colloquial* dialect than I do, for there are few modern Scoticisms which are not barbarisms, though a native of Edinburgh wonders that the English are not sensible of the elegance of such phrases as 'giving a man a hat,' for pulling off your hat to him; 'sitting into the fire,' for drawing toward the fire; 'sitting at the foot of a table,' for sitting at the bottom; &c., &c., &c. Yet, I believe, no man of either kingdom would wish an extinction of the Scotish dialect in poetry. At first—as shewn in the following Essay—a sister-language, it became a kind of Doric dialect to the English; and has a simplicity which will always recommend it where that character ought to prevail. But it were to be wished that it should be regarded in both kingdoms equally as only an ancient and a poetical language; and nothing can take it so much out of the hands of the vulgar as a rigid preservation of the old spelling. Were there no Scotish books that the common people in Scotland could read, their knowledge of the English would increase very rapidly. But while they are enraptured with Barbour's History of Bruce, Blind Hary's Life of Wallace, and the works of Sir David Lindsay—books to be found in modern spelling at this day in almost every cottage of Scotland—their old dialect will maintain its ground. Were these books to be published only in their original orthography, not one in a hundred of the peasantry could read them; and of course they would be forced to read English." (1)

But it was not an alone fastidious dislike of the Scotish

(1) London 1786, p. xvii.

idiom that injured the estimation in which Ramsay's poetry was held. The improvement in the state of Scotland already referred to had also effected a change in the manners and habits of thought of the more sober portion of the common people, which tended greatly to lessen the relish with which most of the pieces of Ramsay had been received by those of their class and order of society on their first appearance.

"When Fergusson arose, or Burns appeared," says a writer to whom we have already referred, "they found a population qualified and prepared to peruse at once and appreciate the productions of their muse; but when Allan first tuned the Doric reed it was vastly different. Whatever the case might be amongst the upper and middle classes of society, one thing is certain that in Allan's time, the peasantry and mechanics of Scotland had lost all relish for ordinary reading. The splendid writings of the numerous poets who preceded and to some extent ushered in the Reformation had been long forgotten and laid aside. With a few exceptions the youth of Scotland had heard no writings extolled save those of the clergy. So far also as manners and habits were concerned, Scotland at that time resembled a vast Dutch level. Ramsay, whether purposely or not, seems to have gone cautiously or rather craftily to work."(1) In order to provoke to improvement, it was necessary to use the pen of the satirist, disguised in broad humour. To satirise with effect a coarse and barbarous age, the language employed must be plain and homely.

Ramsay had begun to compose at a very early age, and when he commenced his literary career he had a stock of poetry on hand which none had read but himself. Had his object in constructing or publishing his earlier verses

(1) Hogg's Weekly Instructor, December 5th, 1845.

been merely the gratification of a poetic ambition, he was capable, we may venture to say, of producing at the very first, poems which would have gained him a name among the learned and refined of his day. His own taste, as finally developed in the Gentle Shepherd, and in some of his sweet minor pastorals, was such as might be expected from his close and assiduous study of the writings of the most polished authors of the day, Pope, Addison, and Prior—elegant, classical, and most thoroughly refined. But he appears to have had from the outset a great project in his mind—the enlightenment of the grovelling masses of Scotland—and to carry out his project he behoved, whilst in reality making them the subjects of ludicrous satire, to adopt for a time, in appearance at least, the tastes of the multitude he sought to illuminate.(1) And such was the character of his earliest pieces, although several of them without much impropriety have been classed in this edition as comic ones.

One of the besetting sins of that age seems to have been drunkenness, and the first satires of Ramsay were directed against it in terms as coarse and homely as irresistibly comic. The Elegy on Maggy Johnstoun, his first piece, is a keen satire on the excesses of suburban convivialities, conducted under the mask of comic description. 'Christ's Kirk on the Green' was a bolder experiment of the same kind, aimed at the gross intemperance and riotous brawling prevalent in the rural districts. "Though professedly descriptive of the manners of the previous century, it was obviously written to satirize the barbarism of Ramsay's own times. Had it not pleased as poetry it would have raised about its author's ears a storm of execrations. But it took. No poem ever did more, and that almost instantaneously,

(1) Hogg's Weekly Journal, 5th December, 1815.

to improve the taste and civilize the manners of a rude and unclassical people. That this was what Ramsay aimed at every thing goes to prove."(1) The 'Elegy on John Cowper,' in like manner, is not only a burlesque but a satire, of which the moral is not difficult to discover. Indeed, whether designedly or not, it is evident that Ramsay at this period laboured, and successfully too, by means of their own language, to stimulate or rather to ridicule a rude and half-civilized people into greater correctness and propriety of manner. This having been effected, he next endeavoured to inspire them with a taste for reading authors of merit. Already reference has been made to the many commendations of the classical poets and writers of the day, contained in his middle age compositions. In order to further this design, he also established a circulating library for the common people within twelvemonths after the first introduction of a similar institution into Britain. The result is thus described:—"In the towns there was now quite a literary commotion. Mechanics of all classes began to form themselves into small associations for literary purposes. Not only were the English classics as well as the Tatler and the Spectator read, but the Gentleman's Magazine, and one or two less known periodicals, not to name newspapers, were commissioned from London."(2)

Already between 'Christ's Kirk on the Green,' and the 'Gentle Shepherd,' Scotland had very much altered. Her peasantry could not have relished Patie and Roger at the earlier period. Even so the Gentle Shepherd was

(1) Hogg's Weekly Instructor, December 5th, 1845. At the end of this poem in a footnote, he says, "I have penned these comical characters having gentlemen's health and pleasure and *the good manners of the vulgar* in view; the main design being to represent the follies and mistakes of low life in a just light, making them appear as ridiculous as they really are, that each who is a spectator may avoid being the object of laughter."—See vol. i., p. 335.

(2) Hogg's Weekly Instructor, 5th December, 1845.

prospective, and Patie intended evidently for a specimen of what shepherds have become in the nineteenth century, rather than what they were in the middle of the eighteenth.

But what a contrast is it not in respect of genius, but of classical elegance of diction, refined purity of sentiment and good taste to his earliest efforts? How useful too; how many thousands of youth have become readers from merely these lines—

"Whene'er he drives our sheep to Edinburgh port
He buys some books o' history, sangs, or sport,
Nor does he want o' them a rowth at will,
And carries aye a pouchfu' to the hill.
About ane Shakespear, and a famous Ben,
He aften speaks, and ca's them best o' men.
How sweetly Hawthornden and Stirling sing,
And aft ca'd Cowley, loyal to his king,
He kens fu' weel, and gars their verses ring.
I sometimes thought he made o'er great a phrase
About fine poems, histories, and plays.
When I reprov'd him ance—a book he brings,
Wi' this, quoth he, on braes I crack wi' kings."(1)

But whatever its effect might be on the lower classes, the improvement which Ramsay sought to effect upon his countrymen had about the middle of the last century already begun in the middle and educated classes to take a direction highly unfavourable to his fame as a literary man. The passion for English literature, excited at first by the writings of Addison and Pope, and stimulated by the success of Thomson and Blair, (2) manifested itself in a supreme esteem for what it called style and elegance of manner in writing, the successful attainment of which

(1) Hogg's Weekly Instructor, 5th December, 1845.
(2) Author of the 'Grave.'

in the writings of Hume, Robertson and Blair, (1) (particularly those of the latter, in which it constituted the chief if not the sole merit,) greatly gratified the national vanity.

Under the influence of these feelings it is not to be wondered at that Ramsay's popularity and reputation should suffer among the middle and upper classes, or that his works should disappear from their libraries and parlours, and be found only, or in the great majority of cases, on the shelves or in the *pockets* of the peasantry. It is by the knowledge of these circumstances also that we can account for the abandonment of the Scottish muse by native writers, some of whom, as Meikle,(2) and Beattie, and Blacklock, had exhibited great promise in their early attempts—for the fact that a genius so young yet so vigorous as Fergusson was allowed to live and die unnoticed, and perhaps unheard of, by the literati of the metropolis in which he wrote—and for the vehement desire of Burns, even in his earliest youth, 'when beardless, young, and blate,' to vindicate the claims of his country and of the old national language to consideration and respect.

> "Ev'n then a wish, (I mind its power,)
> A wish that to my latest hour
> Shall strongly heave my breast;
> That I, for poor auld Scotland's sake,
> Some useful plan, or beuk could make,
> Or sing a sang at least."

Accordingly we find that although edition after edition of one or other of Ramsay's publications appeared in

(1) Hugh Blair, best known by his elegantly written sermons, but author of various other works, especially 'Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres.'

(2) We assume it is now established that Meikle was the author of that beautiful ballad 'There's nae luck about the house.'

the course of the twenty years following his death,—five of them indeed within two years after it,(1)—yet, with one or at most two exceptions, they are mere reprints on very inferior paper and issued at prices evidently intended for circulation only amongst the million.

Of the exceptions to the very inferior character of the editions of his works published during the first forty years following his death, the most celebrated is the famous quarto edition of Ramsay's 'Gentle Shepherd,' illustrated with characteristic drawings by the celebrated David Allan, and published by the Messrs. Foulis of Glasgow, in 1788,—an edition which excited the envy and admiration of Burns, who, in one of his letters, calls it "the most glorious edition of the most glorious poem that ever was written." Allied by his genius with our national poets, and enthusiastic in his admiration of this pastoral, Allan visited the scene of the drama, and studying carefully the manners of the natives around it, produced a series of designs every way worthy of the work they adorned. The other exceptions were the various editions of his songs set to music, and issued at intervals, sometimes by the composers themselves and sometimes by publishers of books, a practice which, as respects a separate collection of these lyrics, ceased entirely after the appearance of George Thomson's in 1793.

In an introductory essay on Scottish song, prefixed to the re-issue, in 1829, of Johnson's Musical Museum with notes by Stenhouse, and evidently from the pen of the

(1) Poems by Miller. London, 1760. Poems by Donaldson. Edin., 1760. Songs by do., do., 1768. Gentle Shepherd by do., do., 1761. Evergreen, do., do, 1761. Tea Table Miscellany, do., do., 1761. Another edition of the Tea Table Miscellany appeared in 1765 (the 14th), and of his poems, one in 1768 and another in 1780. After 1760 the Scots Magazine ceased to index these publications, and it is not so easy to trace them. Various unnoticed editions were issued in Dundee, Glasgow, and other provincial towns.

celebrated David Laing, is a detailed notice of the various musical publications that appeared in Scotland, from the earliest times, till the commencement of the present century, and as it contains information not readily to be found elsewhere, as to various works in which our poet bears a part, and throws some light also on his reputation in connection with song writing, it is deemed fitting to insert them here, in illustration of the foregoing allusion to this subject.

TEA-TABLE MISCELLANY—circa 1726.

"Music for Allan Ramsay's collection of Scots Songs: Set by Alexander Stuart, and engraved by R. Cooper, Vol. First. Edinburgh; printed and sold by Allan Ramsay."

This is a small oblong volume of pp. 156, divided into six parts, and contains the music of seventy-one Songs, selected from the first volume of the Tea-Table Miscellany, printed in 1724. It is very scarce, and no second volume ever appeared. There is a frontispiece to the volume, of a lady touching a harpsichord (on which is the name of the maker, Fenton), and a gentleman with a violin in his hand. Each part has a separate title, — "Musick for the Scots Songs in the Tea-Table Miscellany. Part First," &c.

"Part First—inscrib'd to the Right Honourable Countess of Eglintoun,"—(Susanna Kennedy. To this lady Ramsay dedicated his Gentle Shepherd.)

"Part Second—inscrib'd to the Right Honourable Lady Somerville,"—(Anne Bayntun, grand-daughter of the witty Earl of Rochester.)

"Part Third—inscrib'd to the Honourable Lady Murray of Stanhope,"—(Grizzel Baillie, the lady who was the authoress of Memoirs of her Parents.

"Part Fourth—inscrib'd to the Honourable Lady Weir" (of Blackwood—Christian Anstruther, afterwards Countess of Traquair.)

"Part Fifth—inscrib'd to Miss Christian Campbell."

"Part Sixth—inscrib'd to Mrs. Young."

BOCCHI'S SONATAS—1726.

"Signor LORENZO BOCCHI has published an Opera of his

own composition, by Subscription, containing 12 Sonatas, or Solos, for different instruments, viz. a Violin, Flute, Violoncello, Viola de Gamba, and Scots Cantate; with instrumental parts, after the Italian manner, the words by Mr. Ramsay; with a thorow Bass for the Harpsichord. Subscribers may have their copies at Mr. John Steill's any time before the first of March ensuing. Any person that has not subscribed, may likewise be furnished, there being more copies cast off than will serve the Subscribers."—*Caledonian Mercury*, February 22, 1726.

In Allan Ramsay's Poems, vol. ii. p. 271, is inserted "A Scots Cantata,—Music by L. Bocchi." It begins, "*Blate Johny faintly tald.*" Whether Mr. John Steill was a Music-seller, is uncertain; but there was advertised for the 26th of February 1729, a "Sale by Auction, of the haill Pictures, Prints, Musick-books, and Musical Instruments belonging to Mr. John Steill."—(*Caled. Mercury.*)

WATTS'S MUSICAL MISCELLANY—1729–1731.

"The Musical Miscellany; being a Collection of Choice Songs, set to the Violin and Flute, by the most eminent Masters.

> The man that hath no musick in himself,
> And is not mov'd with concord of sweet sounds,
> Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils.
>
> SHAKESPEAR.

Volume First. London, printed by and for John Watts, at the Printing-office in Wild Court, near Lincoln's-Inn Fields, 1729." 2 vols. small 8vo.

"The Musical Miscellany; being a Collection of Choice Songs and Lyrick Poems; with the Basses to each Tune, and transpos'd for the Flute, by the most eminent masters. Vols. 3 and 4, London, &c., 1730: Vols. 5. and 6, London, &c., 1731, small 8vo.

This collection, forming six volumes, includes several Scotish airs, and songs, evidently derived from Thomson's Orpheus, 1725, or the Tea-Table Miscellany.

BREMNER'S COLLECTIONS, &c.—1749.

"Thirty Scots Songs for a Voice and Harpsichord. The music taken from the most genuine sets extant; the words

from Allan Ramsay. Price 2s. 6d. Edinburgh; printed for, and sold by R. Bremner, at the Harp and Hoboy." Folio, pp. 33. "Circa 1749. This is a genuine copy of the first impression before Bremner went to London; it is extremely rare. The title page was afterwards altered."—(MS. note by Mr. Stenhouse.)

"The Songs in the Gentle Shepherd, adapted to the Guitar. Music 1s. 6d. Bremner." Scots Magazine, December 1759.

"Thirty Scots Songs, by Robert Bremner. The words by Allan Ramsay. London, printed and sold by R. Bremner, opposite Somerset House, in the Strand."

NEILL STEWART'S COLLECTION, circa 1775.

"Thirty Scots Songs, adapted for a Voice or Harpsichord. The words of Allan Ramsay. Edinburgh. Book 1st, price 3s. 6d. Printed and sold by N. Stewart and Co., No. 37, South Bridge Street. J. Johnson, sculpt." Folio, pp. 31.—The same, book second, price 3s., pp. 33. Book third. Printed and sold by Neil Stewart, at his Shop, No. 37, South Bridge Street. J. Johnson, sculpt. Edinburgh, pp. 28.

Besides these separate publications, various of the songs of Ramsay were set to music and inserted in the following collections.

THOMSON'S ORPHEUS CALEDONIUS—1725.

"Orpheus Caledonius, or a collection of the best Scotch Songs, set to musick, by W. Thomson. London; engraved and printed for the Author, at his house, in Leicester Fields. Enter'd at Stationers' Hall, according to Act of Parliament." Folio.

This volume is dedicated to Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales, afterwards Queen Caroline, and contains fifty songs, engraved on separate folios, followed by eight leaves, containing the airs of the songs "for the flute." This work may be considered as entitled to the distinction of being the first professed collection of Scotish Tunes. Although it bears no date, the year usually given to it is correct, as the Editor appeared, and entered his work in the books at the Stationers' Hall, 5th of January 1725.

In the index, Thomson affixes a (*) to the seven following

Songs, as having been "composed by David Rezzio." "The Lass of Patie's Mill."—"Bessie Bell."—"The Bush aboon Traquair."—"The Bonny Boatman."—"An' thou wert my ain thing."—"Auld Rob Morris."—and "Down the Burn, Davie." In republishing this work, as the first volume of his Orpheus, in 1733, no such marks are affixed. (Besides the songs above, it contains others either by Ramsay, or taken from the Tea-Table Miscellany.)

THOMSON'S ORPHEUS—1733.

"ORPHEUS CALEDONIUS: or a Collection of Scots Songs, set to musick, by W. Thomson. London; printed for the author, at his house in Leicester-Fields, 1733," 2 vols. 8vo.

The license granted by George I. for printing this work, to "our trusty and well-beloved William Thomson, of our City of London, Gent.," for the term of fourteen years, is dated 11th May 1733. Each volume contains fifty Songs. The 1st vol., as in the folio edition, is dedicated "To the Queen;" the 2d vol. "To her Grace the Dutchess of Hamilton." Ramsay complains of the insertion of numerous songs by him in this collection.

CRAIG'S COLLECTION—1730.

"A Collection of the choicest Scots Tunes, adapted for the Harpsichord or Spinnet, and within the compass of the Voice, Violin, or German Flute. By Adam Craig. Edinburgh, 1730. R. Cooper, fecit. Entered in Stationers' Hall." Oblong folio, pp. 45, besides the titles and dedication. It is thus dedicated, "To the Honourable Lords and Gentlemen of the Musical Society of Mary's Chappell."

OSWALD'S SCOTS TUNES—1740.

"A Curious collection of Scots Tunes, for a Violin, Bass Viol, or German Flute, with a thorough Bass for the Harpsichord: as also a Sonata of Scots Tunes, in three parts, and some Mason's Songs, with the Words, for three voices; to which is added a number of the most celebrated Scots Tunes, set for a Violin or German Flute. By James Oswald, Musician in Edinburgh." No date; oblong folio, pp. 42.

WALSH'S COLLECTION—circa 1740.

"A Collection of original Scotch Songs, with a thorough Bass to each Song, for the Harpsichord. London; printed for and sold by I. Walsh, servant to his Majesty, at the Harp and Hoboy, in Katharine Street, in the Strand." Folio.

This is merely a collection of Songs which had been engraved and sold as single leaves, without any order or arrangement, and including English imitations of Scotish Songs, sung at Vauxhall Gardens, and other places of public amusement.

NAPIER'S COLLECTION—1790.

"A Selection of the most favourite Scots Songs, chiefly Pastoral, adapted for the Harpsichord, with an accompaniment for a Violin. By eminent Masters. Respectfully inscribed to Her Grace the Dutchess of Gordon. Price £1 6s. London; printed for William Napier, Musicseller to their Majesties, No. 474, Strand." [1790.] Folio.

This was published by subscription, and contains Mr. Tytler's dissertation at the beginning. The sets are excellent. Napier printed a second volume, "A Selection of original Scots Songs, in three Parts, the harmony by Haydn. Dedicated to H. R. H. the Dutchess of York. London," &c. [1792.] Folio, pp. 101.—A Third volume was entered at Stationers' Hall in 1794.

THE MUSICAL MISCELLANY—1792.

"The Edinburgh Musical Miscellany: a Collection of the most approved Scotch, English, and Irish Songs, set to Music. Selected by D. Sime, Edinburgh. Edinburgh, printed for W. Gordon, &c. 1792." The same, "Vol. II. Edinburgh, printed for John Elder, &c. 1793," 2 vols. 12mo.

Besides these the Songs of Ramsay constitute a part of George Thomson's, (1793). Ritson's (the eminent English antiquary, 1794). Urbani's, (1794). The Vocal Magazine, (1797), and many other collections of that period, as well as of all the subsequent and much superior compilations of Scottish Melodies.

It was a disadvantage to Ramsay's posthumous reputation in the then prevailing taste for high refinement and polish of style in literary compositions, as well as in other respects to be afterwards alluded to, that until the appearance, — nearly forty years after his death, —of the biography by Chalmers, no account of him, worthy of the name, had been given to the world. It has already been stated (vol. i. p. 8,) that it had been understood his son had prepared some account of him, left at his death ready for publication. This may account for no other party undertaking the subject. It is evident that some of Ramsay's papers passed into his son's hands, and were intended to have been turned to some use or other by that gifted individual. Chalmers says elsewhere: "In a collection of notes, which the late Duke of Roxburgh had gleaned, with great diligence, in respect to the early drama of Scotland, and which his Grace had the condescension to communicate to me, it appeared, that Ramsay's son, the late painter, was in possession of the transcript of the Satyres and Interludes of Sir David Lyndsay," which Ramsay intended to have printed as a supplement to the Evergreen. These transcripts were copied from the Bannatyne MSS. The age of Ramsay did not perhaps admit of such a publication. "As the genuine drama of Lyndsay is now republished, at length, from a collation of the two first editions of it, we need not regret, that Ramsay did not publish those spurious abstracts."(1) It was natural that a son who owed so much to his father's affectionate liberality, and who was in every respect so competent for the task, should have published an accurate account of his life. As it cannot be doubted but that he intended to do so, it is probable

(1) Works of Sir David Lyndsay, vol. i. p. 95. This circumstance is also mentioned by Pinkerton, Ancient Scotish Poems, *Introduction*, p. cvi.

he was prevented from carrying his intention into effect by the infirmities of his own declining health, and by the unfortunate accident which deprived him during the last ten or twelve years of his life of the use of his right hand. (1)

To what circumstances the spiteful assaults of Pinkerton are to be attributed is now of little consequence, but as that individual will be frequently referred to in connexion with charges against the reputation of our poet, a brief description of this extraordinary character may not be unacceptable to the reader.

"John Pinkerton," says Sir Walter Scott,(2) "a man of considerable learning, and some severity as well as acuteness of disposition, was now endeavouring to force himself into public attention; and his collection of Select Ballads, London, 1783, contains sufficient evidence that he understood, in an extensive sense, Horace's maxim, *quidlibet audendi*. As he was possessed of considerable powers of poetry, though not equal to what he was willing to take credit for, he was resolved to enrich his collection with all the novelty and interest which it could derive from a liberal insertion of pieces dressed in the garb of antiquity, but equipped from the wardrobe of the editor's imagination. With a boldness, suggested perhaps by the success of Mr. Macpherson, he included, within a collection amounting to only twenty-one tragic ballads, no less than five, of which he afterwards owned himself to have been altogether, or in great part, the author. The most remarkable article in this Miscellany was, a second part to the noble ballad of Hardyknute, which has some good verses. It labours, however, under this great defect, that, in order to append his own conclusion to the origi-

(1) See *Cunningham's Lives of B. Painters*, vol. v. p. 40, 41.
(2) Minstrelsy, 1830, vol. i. p. 72.*

nal tale, Mr. Pinkerton found himself under the necessity of altering a leading circumstance in the old ballad, which would have rendered his catastrophe inapplicable. With such license, to write continuations and conclusions would be no difficult task. In the second volume of the Select Ballads, consisting of comic pieces, a list of fifty-two articles contained nine written entirely by the editor himself. Of the manner in which these supposititious compositions are executed, it may be briefly stated, that they are the work of a scholar much better acquainted with ancient books and manuscripts, than with oral tradition and popular legends. The poetry smells of the lamp; and it may be truly said, that if ever a ballad had existed in such quaint language as the author employs, it could never have been so popular as to be preserved by oral tradition. The glossary displays a much greater acquaintance with learned lexicons, than with the familiar dialect still spoken by the Lowland Scottish, and it is, of course, full of errors. Neither was Mr. Pinkerton more happy in the way of conjectural illustration. He chose to fix on Sir John Bruce of Kinross, the paternity of the ballad of Hardyknute, and of the fine poem called the Vision. The first is due to Mrs. Halket of Wardlaw, the second to Allan Ramsay, although it must be owned, it is of a character superior to his ordinary poetry. Sir John Bruce was a brave, blunt soldier, who made no pretence whatever to literature, though his daughter, Mrs. Bruce of Arnot, had much talent, a circumstance which may perhaps have misled the antiquary.

"Mr. Pinkerton read a sort of recantation, in a list of Scottish Poets, prefixed to a selection of poems from the Maitland Manuscript, vol. i, 1786, in which he acknowledges, as his own composition, the pieces of spurious antiquity included in his 'Select Ballads,' with a cool-

ness which, when his subsequent invectives against others who had taken similar liberties is considered, infers as much audacity as the studied and laboured defence of obscenity with which he disgraced the same pages."

Amongst other forgeries of this unscrupulous but not ungifted individual is a singular work, entitled "Letters of Literature," published under the assumed name of Robert Heron, the surname of his mother, which was unfortunately ascribed to the ill-fated author of that name, then rising into notice. This work is remarkable for its dogmatic depreciation of the Greek and Roman authors, and his recommendation of a new system of orthography, much more outré than that proposed by Elphinstone.(1)

The selection of Poems from the Maitland Manuscript above referred to attracted considerable notice at the time. They were described as "ancient Scotish Poems, never before in print." They were accompanied with notes and a glossary, and a "List of all the Scotish poets with brief remarks." When treating in this "List" of our author, he boldly commences in the following strain :—

"1720.

"Allan Ramsay. The convivial buffoonery of this writer has acquired him a sort of reputation, which his poetry by no means warrants; being far beneath the middling, and showing no spark of genius. Even his buffoonery is not that of a tavern, but that of an ale-house.

"The Gentle Shepherd all now allow the sole foundation of his fame. Let us put it in the furnace a little; for, if it be gold, it will come out the purer. Dr. Beattie,

(1) Scottish Biographical Dictionary, by W. Anderson, 1842, article, "Pinkerton."

in his Essay on Laughter and Ludicrous Composition, observes, that the effect of the Gentle Shepherd is ludicrous from the contrast between meanness of phrase, and dignity or seriousness of sentiment. This is not owing to its being written in the Scotish dialect, now left to the peasantry, as that ingenious writer thinks; for the first part of Hardyknute, written in that very dialect, strikes every English reader as sublime and pathetic to the highest degree. In fact this glaring defect proceeds from Allan Ramsay's own character as a buffoon, so evident from all his poems, and which we all know he bore in private life; and from Allan's total ignorance of the Scotish tongue, save that spoken by the mob of Mid Lothian. It is well known that a comic actor of the Shuter or Edwin class, though highly meritorious in his line, yet, were he to appear in any save *queer* characters, the effect would even be more ludicrous than when he was in his proper parts, from the contrast of the man with his assumed character. This applies also to authors; for Sterne's sermons made us laugh, though there was nothing laughable in them: and, had Rabelais, or Sterne, written a pastoral opera, though the reader had been ignorant of their characters, still a something, a je ne sçai quoi, in the phraseology, would have ever provoked laughter. But this effect Ramsay has even pushed further; for, by his entire ignorance of the Scotish tongue, save that spoken by the mob around him, he was forced to use the very phraseology of the merest vulgar, rendered yet more ridiculous by his own turn to low humour; being himself indeed one of the mob, both in education and in mind. So that putting such *queer* language into the mouth of respectable characters—nay, pretending to clothe sentiments, pathos, and all that, with such phraseology—his whole Gentle Shepherd has the same effect as a gentleman would have who chose to drive

sheep on the highway with a harlequin's coat on. This radical defect at once throws the piece quite out of the class of good compositions.

"Allan was indeed so much a *poet*, that in his *Evergreen* he even puts rhyming titles to the old poems he publishes; and by this silly idea, and his own low character, has stamped a kind of ludicrous hue on the old Scotish poetry, of which he pretended to be a publisher, that even now is hardly eradicated, though many editors of great learning and high respectability have arisen.

"I have been the fuller on this subject, because, to the great discredit of taste in Scotland, while we admire the effusions of this scribbler, we utterly neglect our really great poets, such as Barbour, Dunbar, Drummond, &c. There is even a sort of national prejudice in favour of the Gentle Shepherd, because it is our only drama in the Scotish language; yet we ought to be ashamed to hold prejudices so ridiculous to other nations, and so obnoxious to taste, and just criticism. I glory in Scotland as my native country; and, while I try to root up all other prejudices out of my mind, shall ever nourish my partiality to my country; as, if that be a prejudice, it has been esteemed an honest and a laudable one in all ages; and is, indeed, the only prejudice perfectly consonant to reason, and vindicable by truth. But Scotland has no occasion to recur to false history, false taste, false science, or false honours of any kind. In the severest light of truth she will stand very conspicuous. Her sons, in trying to adorn her, have shown remarkable defects of judgment. The ancient history of the Picts, so splendid in the page of Tacitus, is lost in our own fables. We neglect all our great poets, and are in raptures with Allan Ramsay. Our prejudices are as pitiful as strong; and we know not that the truth would make us far more illustrious, than all our dreams of prejudice, if *realized*,

to use an expression of impossibility. Good sense in antiquities, and good taste in poetry, are astonishingly wanting in Scotland to this hour."

In addition to the above, which sufficiently indicate the spirit of the writer, Pinkerton, who loses no opportunity of launching a sneer at Ramsay, remarks in his notice of Ferguson: "This young man, though much inferior to the next poet, had talents for Scotish poetry far above those of Allan Ramsay; yet, unhappily, he was not learned in it, for Ramsay's Evergreen seems to have been the utmost bound of his study. Hence the awkward closes of *that day*, &c. to his stanzas, which were introduced by the ignorance of Allan, and are unknown to our old poets."

On account of the really curious matter presented for the first time to the public in this selection, it naturally was much consulted by the curious in Scottish poetry. Containing also many novel opinions and some bold and not improbable conjectures on the origin of the Scottish nation and language, its opinions exercised a great influence on subsequent writers, which his subsequent works —one of them "An Inquiry into the History of Scotland preceding the Reign of Malcolm III., including the authentic history of that period," containing many rare and curious documents of great value to the student of Scottish antiquities—could not fail to augment. And, indeed, it was not for many years afterwards that the real value of Pinkerton's criticisms came to be acknowledged by Scottish writers, or his depreciating estimate of Ramsay ceased to be felt.

The result of the publication of the Memoir of Ramsay by George Chalmers is an illustration of the truth of this remark. It appears to have been hastily got up, and perhaps as much with the view of satisfying the publisher, as from any personal interest in the subject of his biography.

It was written under a strong *antiquarian* bias, that is, the bias which a lover of the true and the faithful in matters pertaining to the past, according to his ideas of what that true and faithful is, has against those whom he believes to have violated both or either. That he was then satisfied Ramsay was an offender in these respects is evident in every page of that memoir, and he felt and wrote about him accordingly. Still, the clear facts which his industry brought to light enabled him to dispute and even disprove various statements touching our poet's circumstances and condition contained in the foregoing extracts, or which otherwise had got into general circulation, and in so far he rendered good service to his memory. But owing perhaps to the circumstance of the edition of the poems to which that Life was prefixed having been published in London, at a price that placed it out of the reach of ordinary purchasers, having soon gone out of print, and no second edition of it having appeared, the publication of these facts seems not to have been sufficient to remove the errors which had in these respects obtained possession of the mind of the public. A disreputable wretch of the name of Callander, who was "obliged to flee from the justice of his country," had in "a disgraceful compilation of no authority" published in 1791, called "Miscellanies in Prose and Verse," which, although appearing without any name, was at the time by general report assigned to Lord Gardenstone, one of the Judges of the Court of Session, invidiously put forth a statement "that Ramsay died a bankrupt, and that his son had paid his debts."(1) Although this statement was satisfactorily disproved by Chalmers, and on authority which could not be gainsaid,(2) yet we find it, upwards of thirty years afterwards, repeated by Allan

(1) Vol. I. p. 40.

(2) Note, Vol. I. p. 40.

Cunningham in his Life of the son, who says, "When Ramsay's father died in embarrassed circumstances in 1757, he paid his debts, and settled a pension on his unmarried sister, Janet Ramsay, who died in 1804;" and the publication in which it appeared has in various subsequent compilations, notwithstanding of Chalmers' positive statement to the contrary, been attributed to and received authenticity from the circumstance that it has been stated therein to be in reality the production of his Lordship(1)—a circumstance the more to be regretted, that it casts upon his reputation falsely the stain of having, "at a period when age might have been expected to correct the pruriency of a youthful imagination," given sanction to the publication of effusions replete with personal satire, with unfounded charges against religion and religious men, as well as with a libertinism of the most offensive character.

One injurious effect of the comparative silence of contemporary writers, and of the misstatements alluded to, as well as others to be noticed shortly, was that erroneous ideas came to be entertained and to be generally credited as to the condition in life and personal character of our poet. In the absence of almost all other information, the fact of his having followed for a number of years the trade of a wig or periwig-maker, gave rise to a natural misapprehension. That vocation having, as already stated, become at a later period connected with the cutting of hair, &c., the two callings became so identified in the public mind, that Ramsay was generally described and thought of as a common shaver or barber.

A well intentioned but not well informed writer in the

(1) Life of Lord Gardenstone in Lives of Eminent Scotsmen, Part 5, p. 87. Scottish Biographical Dictionary, article "Francis Garden, Lord Gardenstone," 324.

Scots Magazine for 1797,(1) who professes to gratify the curiosity of his countrymen respecting the author of the 'Gentle Shepherd,' which he kindly or with gentle censure professes to commend to their approbation, describes Ramsay as following the trade of a barber, which he couples with such adjuncts as "being necessarily a mean profession," "indicative of a low origin," and of "being in poor circumstances." In like manner this allegation as to Allan's trade and circumstances, although corrected in Chalmers' Life with such circumstantiality as might have satisfied ordinary critics, seems to have failed in influencing future biographers. The distinction attempted to be made betwixt a wig-maker and a barber seems by some of them to be considered as one in name only. "Most of the biographers of Ramsay," says one of them in the 'Lives of Eminent Scotsmen,' written in 1821, "have evinced great anxiety to impress on their readers that Ramsay, although a wig-maker, was no barber, *as some London publications have ungenerously insinuated.* Where the real distinction, in point of respectability, lies between the kindred occupations, it is difficult to perceive; neither of them have been very productive of great men, and a Ramsay can scarcely have given more dignity to the one, than an Arkwright has to the other."(2) In an otherwise very sensible note to a reprint of the ancient poem of 'Robin and Makyne,' published in the British Minstrel, a collection of ancient ballads, which appeared in Glasgow in 1828, and had an extensive circulation, John Struthers, the editor—a brother poet, author of 'The Poor Man's Sabbath'—says of him, "Had Ramsay been taught to reap corn rigs, in place of being sent to reap beards, or, as beard-reaping seems to be scouted by his ardent ad-

(1) Under the anonymous signature of Scotticus.
(2) Vol. V. p. 72.

mirers, had he remained in the country to theek corn-stacks, instead of the 'witty pashes' of Edinburgh, I have no doubt that his editorial labours had been much more valuable to mankind."(1) Dr. Irving, whose elegant biography of him appeared in 1810, commences his narrative by asserting, that "of all the aspiring characters who among our countrymen have emerged from the lowest stations in life, few will be found to have attracted a larger portion of attention than the author of the Gentle Shepherd;"(2) and, in extenuation of his faults, says, "in a writer of his defective education much will be pardoned by the humane reader."(3) Sneers at his want of learning are to be found in most of the accounts of his life. Even to the present day the current opinion of the mass of his countrymen respecting him, even that of men of intelligence and candour, is tolerably accurately reflected in the language put by Sir Walter Scott into the mouth of one of the most original of his characters—the Baron of Bradwardine—in his national romance of Waverley. "And he (the Baron) sometimes could not refrain from expressing contempt of the vain and unprofitable art of poem-making," in which he said, "the only one who had excelled in his life-time was Allan Ramsay the periwig-maker."(4) Thinking, however, upon further reflection, that he had made the Baron speak of our poet in terms too contemptuous, Sir Walter, in the edition here quoted from, adds the following note, which had not appeared in the earliest ones: "The Baron ought to have remembered that the joyous Allan literally drew his blood from the noble Earl whom he terms

> 'Dalhousie, of an auld descent,
> My stoup, my pride, my ornament.'"

(1) British Minstrel, vol. ii. p. 80.
(2) Lives of Scottish Poets, vol. ii. p. 309.
(3) Ibid., p. 327.
(4) Edition 1841, vol. i. p. 129.

He might have added, with Allan Cunningham in his life of the son, that "Ramsay's claim was fully admitted by the contemporary Earl, who thought it to his honour that the restorer of the Scottish national poetry was of his family tree."(1)

It may appear to be a matter of no importance to the world to know whether on his first entrance into life Allan Ramsay plied the calling of an honest wig-maker, or followed that of a humble but industrious barber. It is, however, as Chalmers remarks, "always interesting to detect error, and ever pleasing to propagate truth," even in trivial matters. Moreover, the statements respecting him copied in the foregoing pages are so intertwined and linked together, that each particle of error they contain appears, if not to support, at least to lend a semblance of probability to all the others. If Ramsay was an ignorant, vulgar buffoon, the companion of the lowest of the mob of Edinburgh, and speaking and writing only their barbarous dialect, it were reasonable to infer that he must have followed some mean degrading craft, and that therefore he might with great probability have been a barber and a bankrupt. And if he were a barber of more presumption than judgment, who attempted, on the strength of his verses, to establish himself as a bookseller, but had closed his life as an impoverished man and a bankrupt, he might, in like manner, without improbability, be conceived of as being also an ignorant and a vulgar buffoon. A very few remarks, however, it is hoped, will settle the contested or doubted point as to Allan's original occupation.

In our Scottish burghs, up till the middle of the last century, the rights of the incorporated trades were maintained with watchful jealousy. In Edinburgh particu-

(1) *B. Painters*, vol. v. p. 34.

larly the infringement of them by *unfree* men appears to have given occasion to not a few contentions and appeals to the magistrate. Fountainhall(1) gives a curious account of an action brought by Robert Malloch in 1701, against the magistrates of Edinburgh, for shutting up the Halkerston's Wynd Port. From this it appears that a suburban village had sprung up on Moutrie's Hill, the site now occupied by James' Square, in which a number of poor weavers and other tradesmen had set up in defiance of the incorporations of the *Gude Toun*. The deacons finding their crafts in danger, took advantage of an approaching election to frighten the magistrates into a just sense of the enormity of tolerating such unconstitutional interlopers so near their ancient burgh. The port was accordingly shut up, and the sluices of the North Loch closed, so as to flood a small mound that had afforded a foot-path to the port for the free-traders of this obnoxious village. The battle was stoutly maintained for a time, but the magistrates finding the law somewhat rigid in its investigation of their right over the city ports, and the election most probably being satisfactorily settled meanwhile, they opened the port of their own accord, and allowed the sluices of the North Loch again to run. The passage from the High Street referred to in this suit by the name of Halkerston's Wynd, was a few doors higher up in that street than the shop where Ramsay appears to have first commenced to do business. A view of it is given in the vignette title-page of this volume. On the 2d June 1681, a complaint was laid before the Privy Council by the celebrated Lord Halton, afterwards Earl of Lauderdale, stating that he was then building a lodging for himself in the Canongate, and having employed some country masons, the craftsmen of the burgh

(1) Fountainhall's Decisions, vol. ii. p. 110.

assaulted them, and carried off their tools. In the evidence, it is shown that even a freeman of the capital dared not encroach on the bounds of the Canongate; and that, "in 1671, the Privy Council fined David Pringle, chirurgeon, for employing one Wood, an unfree barber, to exerce his calling in polling the children's heads in Heriot's Hospital!"(1) In this case Lord Halton seems also to have been left free to employ his own workmen; but the craftsmen were declared warranted in their interference, and therefore free from the charge of rioting. Heriot's Hospital was at that period, not the edifice at present known by that name, which was not so far completed as to be in a state to lodge the boys supported on the donation, but in the place originally destined for them by the benevolent founder, and minutely described in his Testament "the great house" situated in the north end of Mint Court, in the lower part of the ancient burgh of the Canongate. From the decision in the case quoted in the trial here referred to, it will be seen, that although legally qualified for exercising his craft in the city of Edinburgh so immediately contiguous to it, and although employed by a legally qualified surgeon of that burgh, a barber was not permitted to use his scissors in the Canongate, and that for having called him in to do so, the surgeon of the locality was subjected to a fine by no less an authority than the Court of Session, at no doubt the instance of the local tonsors. And as Ramsay never became a freeman of either the superior corporation of the surgeons, or of the dependent one of barbers, it is evident that he no more could, either by himself or by others, exercise the art of the latter, than he could the mystery of a cordwainer, or the handicraft of a goldsmith,(2) or assume the wig and functions of an advo-

(1) Fountainhall's Decisions, vol. i. p. 138-9. (2) Life, Vol. I. p. 30.

cate. Even so recently as 1722, the barbers, who until then were dependent upon their patrons the surgeons, through whom alone they could be employed, were separated from the latter and formed into a separate body, with exclusive privileges.(1)

What, then, was Allan's precise position as a wig-maker?

1. It is admitted on all hands, that he prosecuted this business "at the sign of the Mercury, opposite Niddry's Wynd." Here, while still a wig-maker, he published in 1716 his first edition of "Christ's Kirk on the Green."(2) Of the respectability of this site in or before 1710, when he must have been established in business there(3)—for such situations were rarely obtained and still more rarely shifted from—some idea may be formed when it is stated on the authority of Wilson, that on the west side of the Old Stamp Office close, a few tenements higher up, then lived Alexander ninth Earl of Eglinton, and his lovely Countess, Susannah Kennedy, to whom the Gentle Shepherd is dedicated, and that in the Bishop's close, two tenements lower down — so called from having been the residence of John Spottiswood, archbishop of St. Andrews—the front land—the residence of that primate of Scotland, and possessing a fine brass balcony projecting from the first floor—appears, from the evidence in the famous Douglas cause, to have been the residence of Lady Jane Douglas—who resided and was visited there by the Lord Advocate of that day in 1752—to have been the house

(1) Maitland's Hist. Edin. 313-14. Soon after 1722, however, the barbers seem to have conjoined the business of wig-making with their original vocation. We find the father of William Falconer, the author of "The Shipwreck," following the combined trades in the Netherbow in a very humble way.—*Memorials of Edinburgh*, vol. ii. p. 55.

(2) Scottish Biographical Dictionary, article "Ramsay."

(3) See *ante*, p. 215. He was married in 1712, and must have been in a shop of his own some time before that period.

of the first Lord President Dundas, and the birth-place of the celebrated Lord Melville, and that so aristocratic were its denizens, that it is stated on the authority of an old citizen, there was not a family resident in any of its flats, towards the end of the century, who did not keep livery servants.(1) Here, in the centre of the most crowded and aristocratic thoroughfare of the metropolis of Scotland, did Ramsay commence and for many years continue to carry on a business, which Robert Chambers with great probability describes "to have been at that time a flourishing profession." His only rival in that neighbourhood, down inside of a close called Chalmers' close, near to John Knox's house, but at a somewhat later period, is described as a respectable burgess, and the grandfather of the late Lord Jeffrey.(2) These circumstances, and the known fact, that with the business of a wig-maker, peruke-maker, or peruquier, was conjoined the trade of a perfumer—a trade with which Allan seems to have been familiar, as we find him so early as 1712,(3) in the Morning Interview, making Damon say to his valet Roger—(and the quotation will illustrate more than one point already touched upon —as well as show that a wig-*maker* was not of necessity a wig-*dresser*)—

> "Haste, do my wig! tye 't with the careless knots,
> And run to Civet's, let him fill my box;
> Go to my laundress, see what makes her stay;
> And call a coach and *barber* in your way."

and it will explain a fact which we have met with in contemporary history, but of which we have lost the re-

(1) Memorials of Edinburgh, vol. ii, p. 35. (2) Ibid. p. 35.
(3) 1712. See Note to this poem, Vol. I. p. 275, also p. 55. By its position in the quarto edition, and internal evidence, as well as the date of the second edition (1719), it is evident the date here given 1721 is a misprint for 1712; and that this elegant poem was among his early compositions when Pope and English verse were the model and object of his ambition.

ference, of the wife of a peruke-maker in Leith who had plotted with her servant—who resembled him in figure—to defraud her husband, having caused him to be dressed in the coat or other attire of that individual, and by that means succeeded in negociating a bill for a large amount in the twilight at the cross of Edinburgh, which fraud he was enabled to practise on account of the known wealth and respectability of the personated husband.

2. "There can be no doubt," says Robert Chambers, one of the best, if not the best, informed of his biographers, and the most recent, "that Allan Ramsay served out his apprenticeship honourably, and afterwards for a number of years practised his trade as a master successfully; circumstances that, in our opinion, justify the discretion and good sense of his step-father, more powerfully than any reasoning could do. It is to be regretted that of this period of his life, no accounts have been handed down to us; and the more so, that we have no doubt they would show his general good sense, and the steady character of his genius, more powerfully than even the latter and more flourishing periods of his history. Unlike the greater number of men of poetical talent, Ramsay had the most perfect command over himself; and the blind gropings of the cyclops of ambition within, led him to no premature attempts to attain distinction. Though he must have entertained day-dreams of immortality, he enjoyed them with moderation; and, without indulging either despondency or dejection, he waited with patience for their realization. Prosecuting his business with diligence, he possessed independence; and, while, in the company of respectable fellow-citizens, he indulged and improved his social qualities, he, by taking to wife an excellent woman, Christian Ross, the

daughter of a writer in Edinburgh, laid the foundation of a lifetime of domestic felicity."(1)

3. It appears by the entries in the Edinburgh Register of Births and Baptisms, that during this imperfectly known period of his life, our poet had indeed, as Chambers says, moved in the company of respectable fellow-citizens, inasmuch as of six individuals witnesses to the births of his children from 1713 to 1716, five belonged to the class of merchants,—one of them, by name John Symers, appearing on all the four occasions.(2) His only other associates at this epoch of whom there are any traces, were the fellows or gentlemen of the Easy club. To his connection with this association—half literary, half political—Ramsay and Scotland owe, perhaps, the development of his poetic talent. The pleasure afforded to his associates by the earliest efforts of his muse led them to exact such productions from him with frequency; and ultimately to publish a portion of them at once for the credit of their brotherhood, and for the gratification of the public. "Being," says he on one occasion, "but an indifferent sort of an orator, my friends would merrily allege that I was not so happy in prose as rhyme. It was carried by a vote, against which there is no opposition; and on the night appointed for some lessons on wit, I was ordered to give my thoughts in verse".(3) They "were published," says Robert Chambers, "by or under the patronage of the fraternity, probably in notices of its sittings which would tend to give it celebrity and add to its influence."(4) But for these circumstances, and for the enthusiastic reception which these broadsheets received at the hands

(1) Lives of Illustrious Scotsmen, vol. iv. p. 128.
(2) Vol. I. p. 41.
(3) Vol. I. p. 333.
(4) Lives of Illustrious Scotsmen, vol. iv. p. 128.

of his countrymen, Ramsay, in all probability, would have lived and died an industrious but wealthy peruquier.

The Easy club is so associated with the early life of Ramsay, that his biographers have generally hazarded a few remarks as to its membership and proceedings; and considering, as we now are, how far he merited the opprobrious epithets of Pinkerton, or is correctly described as "one of the lowest of the mob in associates and mind," we have been led to look at these remarks with a greater degree of attention than we might otherwise have bestowed upon them. It appears to have been formally constituted in 1712; but, like its many successors, it is probable that it had been in existence for some years previous, and then took its precise name and peculiar features from the characteristics developed in its earlier proceedings. Ramsay's lines presented to the members on the occasion of its installation,—and which Chalmers,—erroneously, as we suppose—asserts to have been his earliest production in verse, would appear to imply that the qualities exhibited at their usual meetings were well known to him:

> "Great sense and wit are ever found
> 'Mong you always for to abound;"

and, again, in allusion to their propensities to poetry:

> "Apollo's self unknown attends,
> And in good humour reascends
> The forked Parnassus."

By a special law of the society, the extent of its membership, as Ramsay himself informs us, was so restricted as that it could never exceed twelve in number; and, in order to conceal the real names in the registry—and occasional publications of its lucubrations—the fun-

damental constitution of the society required that every gentleman at his admission should have a *soubriquet* or characteristic name assigned to him.(1) So far as they have descended to us, all these *nommes de societé* were those of parties distinguished by their connection with literature, and chosen, in all likelihood, from some analogy in habit or pursuits, previously recognised by the associates.

Ramsay has designated the club, "a *juvenile* society." Without any other evidence that appears, Chalmers —and all the writers who follow him—assumed that it was an association of *young* men. Reasoning upon this as a literal fact, he adds, "his associates were young men who had their studies to prosecute and their establishments to form," "who possessed talent and vivacity, and who wished to pass stated evenings in free conversation and social mirth," and, as we think gratuitously insinuates, that "his motive for desiring to join it," was his "strong desire to give and to receive the pleasures of *conviviality*." That Ramsay felt pleasure in society of a cheerful and even of a jocose character, is sufficiently evident from his writings; but that he had "a strong desire to give and to receive" what is *now* understood by "the pleasures of conviviality," there is nothing to prove, and on the contrary much to lead us to doubt. He *must* have been temperate. His writings convey that impression. His prolonged life and active habits confirm it. Besides, a juvenile society is not a society composed of individuals of a juvenile age, any more than a young country is a country of young men. In an age of such associations, there must have been then various clubs of some standing in Edinburgh, and—unless he used an *equivoque* the better to conceal the real truth—

(1) Vol. I. p. 173., note by Ramsay.

by designating it "a *juvenile* society" Ramsay only distinguished it from the others of earlier foundation. One of the most distinguished of these was the 'WORTHY CLUB,' of whose members a detailed enumeration is given in the Memoirs of Dr. Alexander Pennecuick (Leith, 1815). Duncan Forbes of Culloden; Sir Gilbert Elliot of Minto; John Forbes of New Hall, and other friends of Ramsay were members; and hence his desire to make the distinction. It frequently met at New Hall House, one of the parlours of which is (or was) called 'The Club-room.' On the ceiling of that room is a painting of Ramsay reciting, long "before it was printed," the embryo passages of the Gentle Shepherd. The name of this club seems to have suggested that of Sir William Worthy. Of the date of the establishment of the 'Worthy Club' we have no record, but it was in existence long before 1714. Clubs were then, says the biographer of Pennecuick, almost universally frequented both in London and Edinburgh. Even the blacksmith of Linton had his club.(1) When Ramsay wrote the words above (1716), he had been four years married, and was in his thirtieth year. He was not, at that age, likely to seek admission into an association of students, or youths entering into life, any more than to announce to the world his connection with such a body. That Dr. Archibald Pitcairne, the celebrated physician, wit, and Latin poet, was an influential and honoured member of the Easy club, is implied, if not directly asserted, in Chalmers' biography. The reference to, if not rather the quotation from, Ramsay's Elegy on the death of that distinguished individual, first read before and afterwards printed and circulated by them,

(1) Memoirs, p. 25.

> "the moanings of an infant muse
> Who wants his nurse; *he's gone who did infuse,*
> *In us* the principles of wit and sense,"(1)

admits of no other conclusion. But Pitcairne in 1712 was in the 59th or 60th year of his age, a Professor in the University, and at the head of his profession. In "The Gentleman's Qualifications debated,"(2) Dr. Pitcairne may be recognised as the 'Tippermalloch' in that controversy, having republished, with a supplement by himself, a collection of simple remedies suitable for the poor, by John Moncrief, Esq. of Tippermalloch, a gentleman of an eccentric but benevolent disposition.(3) If, at the distance of nearly 140 years, a conjecture may be hazarded as to the other personages in that debate, it would not be difficult to recognise in 'Buchanan' that most learned printer and scholar Thomas Ruddiman, and perhaps also in 'Hector Boece,' his friend Dr. Patrick Abercrombie, author of the 'Martial Atchievements of the Scots Nation.' Ruddiman was then, however, in his 38th year, and Abercrombie—born in 1656—56 years old. Rather unseemly associates these for a select club of students or young men entering into life!! Could these conjectures be confirmed, it will follow that, so far from having associated with the mob, Ramsay, even in the *earliest* period of his life of which we have any trace, had as his companions men of whom any individual of any age and country might well be proud.

They are founded upon the analogy between these characteristic names, and the occupations or habits of

(1) Vol. I. p. 16.
(2) Vol. I. p. 173.
(3) "Moncrief's (John of *Tippermalloch*), Poor Man's Physician, a Choice Collection of Simple and Easy Remedies for most Distempers, published by the celebrated Dr. Archibald Pitcairn, 1731." The *third* edition of this work.—*T. G. Stevenson's Catalogue, Edinburgh*, 1850.

the parties, as well as their common friendship, and similarity in political opinions. In the case of Ramsay, we find his first *club* designation was the then familiar name of Isaac Bickerstaff,—of the propriety of the selection of which Chalmers seems to doubt, but which to us seems of easy explanation. We have only to suppose,—what is otherwise highly probable,—that either the "Elegy on John Cowper," or "The Morning Interview," or both, had been produced by him—although not in so perfect a state as that in which they ultimately appeared before the world,—prior to 1712, and—as was then the general practice, (1) been exhibited to his friends the fellows of the club.

The resemblance—pointed out by Lord Woodhouse-

(1) The number of anonymous and fugitive pieces circulated by Dr. Pitcairne—who it is probable was the founder of the Easy Club,—amongst his friends, is referred to in his Life (Anderson's Scottish Biography). It is needless here to say, that the date of their first publication cannot in almost any instance be assumed as that of the *composition* of Ramsay's pieces. "The Gentleman's qualifications debated," first published—if we can suppose these dates to be correct—in 1715, must have been written three years earlier. The lines on Wit, published in 1716, must have been composed during the existence of the club, and indeed soon after its establishment in 1712. It is therefore quite possible, and indeed very likely, that the "Elegy on John Cowper," although published so late as 1714, was written before 1712, and indeed soon after the account of Partridge's death appeared. As respects "The Morning Interview," see note p. 296, also Vol. I. p. 55. and 275. The force of Lord Woodhouselee's argument, viz. that the mention in it of the sylphs implies its having been composed after 1712, is quite met by the consideration, that the allusion may have been introduced in an after revision of the piece, as the "happy machinery" (so called by Lord W.), was itself inserted, not in the first, but in a *second* edition of the "Rape of the Lock." Ramsay spent much time in the revision of his compositions. By one of his biographers, he is represented as in the habit of rising very early in the morning in order to correct them (Hogg's Weekly Instructor, Dec. 5th, 1845.). The history of the progress of the composition of the Gentle Shepherd, could it possibly be ascertained, would furnish another to many proofs already before the world, of the truth of the remark, that genius is *labour*. From the appearance, as a broad sheet, of that which is now its *first* scene, (see vol. i. pp. 88, 89, and note,) to its completion as a regular drama in 1725, nearly ten years must have elapsed, during which the various *readings* or rather private *editions* of it were both improvements and continued augmentations upon that first attempt.

lee,(1)—of the "Elegy on John Cowper" in its leading invention, broad drollery and keen jocular satire, to the famous account of the death of Partridge, the almanack-maker, by Swift and Pope, which appeared in 1709, published under the name of Isaac Bickerstaff;—(2) the adoption, a few months afterwards, of the same name by Steele in his incomparable and highly popular work "the Tatler;"—in all probability also the similarity of the gentle satire contained in "The Morning Interview," to that of the writings in that renowned periodical; as well as the current belief of the existence of a *real person* to whom it pertained of right;—might well induce the associates of our poet to bestow it upon him. There may have been also other pieces of his known to them, such

(1) Vol. I., p. 56.

(2) "Partridge was the author of various astrological treatises; and the editor of an almanack, under the title of *Martinus Liberatus*. Swift, in ridicule of the whole class of impostors, and of this man in particular, published his celebrated *Predictions for the year* 1708, by Isaac Bickerstaff, Esq., which among other prognostications, announced, with the most happy assumptions of the mixture of caution and precision affected by these annual soothsayers, an event of no less importance than the death of John Partridge himself, which he fixed to the 29th of March, about eleven at night. The wrath of this astrologer was, of course, extreme; and in his almanack for 1709, he was at great pains to inform his loving countrymen that squire Bickerstaff was a sham name, assumed by a lying, impudent fellow, and that, 'blessed be God, John Partridge was still living, and in health, and all were knaves who reported otherwise.'

"There were two incidental circumstances worthy of notice in this ludicrous debate, which had been carried on by both parties: *First*, The inquisition of the kingdom of Portugal took the matter as seriously as John Partridge, and gravely condemned to the flames the predictions of the imaginary Isaac Bickerstaff. *2ndly*, By an odd coincidence, the company of stationers obtained in 1709, an injunction against any almanack published under the name of John Partridge, as if the poor man had been dead in sad earnest. It is astonishing what a number of persons built their faith on the prediction, and actually believed the accomplishment had taken place, in all respects according to the relation. The wits of the time too, among whom were Steele and Addison, supported Swift, and uniformly affirmed that Partridge had died on the day and hour predicted. But the most memorable consequence of the predictions of Isaac Bickerstaff, was the establishment of the same name by Steele, in the *Tatler*."—*A Dictionary of Printers and Printing with the Progress of Literature, ancient and modern; etc. etc. by C. H. Timperley.*

as "The Elegy on Maggy Johnstone," entitling him to be considered as the representative of one who was then described to have given a check to a thousand follies.(1) There is a passage in, or rather a note affixed to, the life of Dr. Pennecuick, which confirms this explanation as far as respects Allan's having been *known* by his poetry *prior* to 1712. "At this date," says the annotist,—in reference to the year 1715, when the works of Pennecuick were for the first time collected and published by himself,—"at this date Allan Ramsay had been 14 years in Edinburgh, was 30 years of age, and, *after* having been known for some time as a writer of verses, had, *at least* two years before that, appeared as an author, under the patronage of the 'Easy club.'" (2) It also—be it remarked in passing—disposes satisfactorily of another and an inconsiderate observation of George Chalmers, viz. "that while Ramsay was yet unknown to fame, and unpractised in the art of book-making, he *made use* of the Easy club as a convenient place of publication."(3) In the then state of literature and society, when authorship as a trade was unknown, it is certainly more probable that, like the venerable topographer and poet referred to,—whose effusions circulated in manuscript for many years before he consented to present them in print,—and like his friend Dr. Pitcairne, many of whose *jeu d' esprits* circulated from hand to hand for a similar period,—when, in short, men only wrote under the impulse of passing feelings, for their own gratification and

(1) "Gay, who lived at this period, speaking of Isaac Bickerstaff, (the assumed name of the conductor of the *Tatler*,) says, 'It is incredible to conceive the effects his writings have had on the town; how many thousand follies they have either quite banished or given a very great check to; how much countenance they have added to virtue and religion; how many people they have rendered happy by showing that it was their own fault if they were not so; and lastly, how entirely they have convinced our fops and young fellows of the value and advantages of learning.'"

(2) Memoir of Dr. Pennecuick, p. 24. (3) Life, vol. i. p. 16.

that of their friends,—our author's pieces—some of which, still retained in this collection, commemorate events that happened in 1710 and 1711 (1)—had circulated amongst his customers and social friends before they were given to the public. The *moral* and satirical character of these earlier pieces, which gained his distinctive name of the 'Censor of Great Britain,' as Steele has called Isaac Bickerstaff, has been discussed by anticipation pages 271, 2, and *passim*. The characteristic of 'Gavin Douglas' appears to have been given to him almost immediately after the club had been constituted, and as the result of the resolution to adopt only those of *Scots* authors, as Ramsay himself states. To this the recent publication of a new edition of the translation by that poet into Scottish verse, of Virgil's Æneid, to which a glossary had been annexed, by Ruddiman, afterwards his printer, and in the preparation of which, it is not impossible that our poet was himself occasionally consulted, may have contributed. (2)

The name of Tippermalloch, if bestowed on Dr. Pit-

(1) That on 'the preservation of Mr. Bruce,' vol. i. p. 144. occurred in 1710. The death of 'Maggie Johnstone' took place in 1711. That of Luckie Spence some years earlier, note, vol. ii. p. 301.

(2) "That all might be done with more accuracy, and to the best advantage, care was taken to consult those who were most able and willing to direct and assist us, (in the preparation of the Glossary,) to whom we return most hearty thanks. Particularly we think ourselves bound to acknowledge the obligations we owe to . . . . Dr. Archibald Pitcairn . . . Thomas Ruddiman, A. M., &c. It was also found necessary to converse with *people of the several shires* and places, where some of the old words are yet used. This seemed the best method of discovering their true meaning, next to the comparing of translations with the originals."—*Preface to Symson and Fairburn's Virgil's Æneis*, 1710.—Ramsay's native soil was in the vicinity of Douglas' birth-place, the scene in which was used his

"awin language,"

which he,

"spake as he lernet when he wes ane page,"

and there are strong grounds to suppose he was then a personal friend of Ruddiman and of the publishers.

cairne, may have acquired its appropriateness, in the opinion of the society, from some points of resemblance in their characters, apart from their literary association in the publication of 'The Poor Man's Physician.' In the preface to that work, we are informed that Moncrief of Tippermalloch was a gentleman remarkable for his kindness to the poor, that he distributed not only advice but medicine gratuitously, and that he had compiled it solely for their benefit. Of Dr. Pitcairne we are informed, that "he was not at all concerned about fees, or frighted from his duty by the sight of poverty in his patient; nay, he went with greater cheerfulness to those from whom he could get nothing but good will than to persons of the highest condition. Besides, in cases which seemed to require that assistance, he not only gave away his skill and medicines, but extended his generosity for the provision of other conveniences for the sick, and left the marks of his charity, as well as of the liberality of his art, behind him."(1) The honour paid to the representative of the benevolent laird of Tippermalloch of being *first* in the debate,

"*First* Tippermalloch pled,"

is what might be expected to be rendered to a man of the very high standing of Dr. Pitcairne; whilst the pertinacity with which that gentleman maintains his views,

"He grew more stiff, nor would the plea let go;
Said he was right, and swore it should be so;"

and the side he supports in the debate are such as might be expected from the known opinionativeness and pride

(1) Dr. Cheyne, quoted in Dr. Irvine's Life of Pitcairne. Lives of Scottish Writers, vol. II. p. 216.

of birth(1) of this 'Prince of physicians.' It may be further remarked, that by twice designating him *Doctor* in the narrative of the debate, Ramsay departs from the incognito; for Moncrief of Tippermalloch was not a physician,—although it is not improbable that he was descended from 'Maister Gilbert Moncrief, mediciner to the king's majestie,' to whom is addressed a poetical epistle of Alexander Hume, who flourished in the reign of James VI., copied in Sibbald;(2)—thus marking him out to public notice even more distinctly than by a *characteristic* with which in all likelihood they were not unfamiliar.

The identity of Ruddiman with the Buchanan of the Easy club, although it receives its probability, in a great measure, from that of the evidence adduced to show that Dr. Pitcairne, "the friend of Bellini, the preceptor of Boërhaave, the master of Mead," as Chalmers calls him, was likewise one of the select twelve, is not without something like positive testimony to rest upon. As respects the former, it may be observed that an accident that, 12 years before, had detained Pitcairne at the inn of the hamlet of Laurencekirk, introduced these two eminent men to each other, and led to a friendship as sincere as is to be met with in the ordinary course of human life. Their literature, their politics, and their general cast of mind, were mutually pleasing to each other. When, on the death of Pitcairne, the poets of Scotland came to offer their verses at the tomb of him who had presided among them, Ruddiman hastened with his tributary tear. He had previously dedicated to him his

(1) He was descended from the ancient family of Pitcairne of Pitcairne in Fife. His mother was descended from that of Sydserf of Ruthlaw. For further confirmation of these remarks, see his Life by Dr. Irvine; also Chalmers' Life of Ruddiman.

(2) Chron. of Scottish Poetry, vol. III. p. 367.

first *avowed* publication, and had bestowed his name on his first-born. Nor did his gratitude terminate with the life of his benefactor. He gratuitously catalogued and negociated the sale of his excellent library to Peter the Great, the Czar of Russia, through the influence of that potentate's physician, Dr. Erskine; and, on the death of his widow, 41 years afterwards, he attempted, in his newspaper, to perpetuate her worth. The silver cup which the physician presented to the grammarian, inscribed with the couplet from Horace,

> "Narratur et prisci Catonis,
> Sæpe mero incaluisse virtus;"

and which but for the intrusion of robbers would have descended as an heir-loom to his children, is not the only record of the former's friendship. In all his literary labours Pitcairne took an earnest delight, and a generous satisfaction; and in none, in a greater degree, than in the undertaking which at this period, and during several years previous, engrossed his attention—an edition of the *omnia opera* of the great scholar, poet, and national historian, George Buchanan. "Pitcairne," says George Chalmers, "the incomparable physician, who, as Ruddiman delighted to tell, was not only skilful in his profession, but profoundly versed in polite literature, gave his continual aid, in this laborious task, so long as he lived."(1) And in no society of which Pitcairne was a member, would the *characteristic* of the name of the great reformer have been permitted to be bestowed, except upon him who had been for so many years occupied in editing, in so masterly a manner, the works of that ornament of his country. In the part assigned to him

(1) Chalmers' Life of Ruddiman, p. 67.

in the "debate" referred to, some resemblance, also, between the cast of Ruddiman's mind and the sentiments of the supposed 'Buchanan,' may be discovered.

> "Buchanan, with stiff argument and bold,
> Pled, gentry took its birth from powerful gold;"(1)—

a sentiment likely to proceed from the son of an honest farmer, then struggling with poverty, in whose view the possession of the means of subsistence could alone insure refinement and grace, and whose reading and observation furnished many examples of the rise of great families from the accident of the wealth of their founders. Chalmers says that Ramsay cultivated the acquaintance of Ruddiman, and drew from him the Greek and Latin mottoes which he prefixed to his writings. How far the latter statement be correct is doubtful, at least in its full extent. But there is no doubt that a mutual good-will existed; for during many years Ruddiman printed all the works of our poet, which, from their *extensive* sale, must have formed an important item in that department of his business.

The positive testimony is in his own statement, "that he never was concerned in any club but two: the one, which was set up many years before he was engaged in it, and consisted of gentlemen of considerable rank, such as Sir Thomas Moncrief, and Sir William Scott, of doctors of physic, and of episcopal ministers: the other was set up by schoolmasters, who were joined by persons of greater consequence, for improving themselves in useful learning, without meddling with church, or state."(2) In this note the only circumstance that would place doubt

(1) Vol. I. p. 173.
(2) A MS. note of Furius, dated May 16th, 1755, quoted in Chalmers' Life, p. 275.

upon the Easy club being the one first referred to, is, that it is said to have been set up many years before he was engaged in it. And notwithstanding that Chalmers asserts the contrary, such is the impression made on our own mind of the Easy club. It were to be wished he had mentioned on what authority his statement was founded. The probability is, that at the epoch he adopts for the commencement of this society they had begun to record their transactions for the first time, and the same motives that led to the adoption of assumed names—the expected interference of government—would lead to ambiguity in their mode of referring to it. Nor is such a case rare in the history of Edinburgh clubs, even where no apprehension existed on political grounds. The 'Mirror club' had existed during a considerable period, under the name of the Tabernacle, before it assumed that which had been adopted for their periodical. In order to conceal its existence, so that the names of the parties writing for it might not be known, the club held its weekly meetings in no fixed place.(1) The 'Cape club,' which made such a figure in the convivial history of Edinburgh toward the latter half of the century, although by its minutes appearing to have been duly constituted, and the mode of procedure finally fixed in the year 1764, yet, on the authority of the same minute-books, it appears that it had existed long before, and the name and the peculiar forms it then adopted, were derived from the characters previously assumed by its leading members.(2)

Sir W. Scott of Thirlstane was one of the intimate friends of the circle of which Pitcairne, Ruddiman, and others formed a part. His Latin inscription, recording

(1) Scottish Biographical Dictionary, article "Craig."
(2) Wilson's Memorials of Edinburgh, vol. II. p. 16.

the admission of Allan's portrait along with other poets in the temple of Apollo, has been already referred to and copied.(1) His fugitive pieces in that language (these lines included) were collected by Ruddiman and published, with a preface nominally by their common friend, Robert Freeman, the printer, but in reality by him, along with the *Selecta Poemata* of Pitcairne, in 1727. This conjunction seems to have arisen no less from a similarity in tastes, than a coincidence in their correspondents. They were both remarkable for the felicitous adaptation of Latin verse to current events, and to ludicrous descriptions. They both were known to have composed verses in the Scottish language. Whilst those of Pitcairne have not—at least in an authenticated form—descended to posterity, Sir W. Scott, on the distinct claim of his descendants, is now the reputed author of "The Blythesome Bridal," a graphic and humorous song, which first appeared in "Watson's collection, 1706," and was afterwards reprinted by Ramsay, in "The Tea-table Miscellany." Mark Napier, Esq., in his "History of the partition of the Lennox," Edin. 1835, says the late Lord Napier informed him that he had it from his father, who had it again from *his*, and he from the son of Sir William, who was *his* father, that Sir William was the author of that song. The counter claim put forward in behalf of Francis Sempill of Beltrees, in a recent publication,(2) for its authorship, overlooks too much what is the fact, that in no *one* place in the west of Scotland could there at any period be found such a collection of piscatorial and vegetable dishes within the reach of the masses as it enumerates; nor was society, in *any part of its sea-coast*, so

(1) Vol. I. p. 79.
(2) The Poems of the Sempills of Belltrees, by James Paterson. Edin., 1849.

homogeneated as to admit of the designations by personal characteristics with which it abounds; that in the west generally, and especially in that part of it where Sempill lived, Edinburgh is never, as in the song, called the 'South' but the 'East;' whilst all these peculiarities unite in the fishing villages of the Frith of Forth, with the manners of which Sir W. Scott, as a resident of Edinburgh, and a humourist, may be supposed to have been familiar. Whoever has read the Macoronic poem by Sir W. Scott, "Ad E——m E——m, Equitam, M.D.," at p. 135 of the *Poemata*, where Scotch and Latin words are employed in conjunction, with an effect as ludicrous as the description itself,

> "Per domum dansant tabulæ, cathedræ
> *Fitsules*, *furmæ*, simul atque *chistæ*
> Rusticam ducit leviterque dansam
> Armo-cathedræ,"

would never doubt, like the advocate of Sempill, of his ability to produce anything in the Scottish vernacular, akin in style or humour to the "Blythesome Bridal."

The probability of the Hector Boece of the "gentleman's qualifications," being the *nomme de societé*, in the club, of the author of the 'Martial Atchievements of the Scots Nation,' is linked with that of Ruddiman's membership. This work was then going through the press. In the preface to the first volume, published in 1711, Dr. Abercrombie confesses his obligations *to his learned friend*, Mr. Thomas Ruddiman. On the appearance of the second in 1715, he again acknowledged the favour that he owed to the judicious and indefatigable Mr. Ruddiman, who not only corrected the copy but superintended the press. The second volume was actually printed, in the greater part, at Ruddiman's print-

ing office. The writer of the work which, in that age, most resembled in character that of the famous Hector Boethius; a jacobite, one who "busied himself in promoting the interest of the abdicated family;" was the fittest to bear his name, as a *characteristic* in the fellowship of which Pitcairne and Ruddiman formed a part. Along with Pitcairne, Dr. A. would constitute *two* of the physicians referred to in the note of Ruddiman. After Pitcairne's death a *third* appears to have assumed *his* name as a characteristic, and to have been awarded the honours of a gentleman in company with Ramsay.(1) That Episcopal clergymen should be in the membership of the Easy club, was the natural consequence of its politics, and one of the causes of its precautions and dispersion in 1715. Calder, "an outed curate," the coadjutor of Pitcairne in the composition of the "Assembly," a satirical comedy, not creditable to their taste, and the author of "Presbyterian Eloquence," an equally unworthy performance,—although containing unfortunately a considerable degree of truth,—whose name appears as one of the poets in the collection of Elegies on the death of Pitcairne in 1713, may be assumed as one of the number.

Such, then, was the position and habit of life of Ramsay in the earliest stage of his career. It would have been as agreeable to represent him, and no dishonour to him to have been, of an origin as low as his detractors have ascribed to him. When Pinkerton taunted him "as being indeed one of the mob, both in education and in mind," he never reflected that it might one day be made to appear, that in all that constitutes respectability, whether in conduct or in associates, the subject of his malice might be shown to have been even

(1) Vol. I. p. 14.

in his lowest state as much superior in these respects to himself, as he was in true dignity of character and in native genius.

It might have been expected that, after the remarks of Lord Woodhouslee(1), a refutation of this writer's charge of vulgarity of language would have been unnecessary. This charge had never been brought against Ramsay except by himself and a few of his own country who have cultivated the artificial and refined in style, a class now happily extinct. The vulgar words of a language, as a recent writer has observed, are ever the oldest,(2) and the best authorised. Ramsay's language was not only the oral language of the farmers of the Lothians and of the citizens of Edinburgh of his day, but that of all ranks of the community;—it was culled from the purest, because the oldest, of the terms in it;—it was understood from one extremity of the kingdom to the other;—it was the *spoken* language of the court of Queen Mary, as well as of that of her learned son, and of her unfortunate father and grandfather;—

> "Qui Scotis numeros suos, novoque
> *Priscam* restituit vigore linguam,"

says the elegant Sir William Scott of Thirlstane of our poet, in his *Selecta Poemata*. "One peculiarity I have observed in Ramsay," says a Lady of advanced years, but still living—not herself unacquainted with the Muses, and who can still recite The Gentle Shepherd from beginning to end—"one peculiarity I have observed in Ramsay is that he is never provincial. A native of the west of Scotland, I can recognise not a few words in Burns peculiar to that district, and many more in Ferguson

(1) Vol. I. p. 51.
(2) Introduction to the Imperial Dictionary, Glasgow 1850.

that are Edinburgh provincialisms; but I have never met with a word in Ramsay that is not, so far as I know, intelligible in every district from Maidenkirk to John O'Groats."

But the hostility which Pinkerton manifested towards the vernacular idiom of his forefathers, was not so much the result of his own ignorance of it—for having been himself a native of Edinburgh, and the son of a dealer in hair there,(1) he knew or ought to have known it well;—nor even of his coxcombical pedantry, great as that was;—but of his antiquarian zeal, or rather of his adoption of an opinion supposed by him to have been indicated by Lord Hailes, the greatest antiquarian of that age, whose superior knowledge he held in high respect. This eminent man having been sent out of Scotland at an early age, and having passed from Eton where he received his early education, to Holland where he completed his legal studies,(2) was thus deprived of the opportunity of acquiring a knowledge of the *colloquial* Scotch of his age; and having,—as he confesses with much ungrateful labour,—sought, when he applied himself to the study of the ancient writings of our poets, to understand them by the aid of ancient glossaries *alone;*—when,—misled by the blunders of his transcribers and the misinformation of his brother antiquaries and having utterly misunderstood also the purpose for which, and the principle upon which, Ramsay's *previous* publication of them had been executed—he issued his edition of *some* of these writings contained in the Bannatyne MSS.;(3)—having in that work charged

(1) Scottish Biographical Dictionary, art. Pinkerton.

(2) Memoir of Lord Hailes, prefixed to his reply to Gibbon, 2d edition, Edin., 1808.

(3) Ancient Scottish poems, published from the MS. of George Bannatyne, 1568. Edin., 1770.

our poet with never having consulted the glossary to Douglas' Virgil and given in illustration a list of words as he supposed erroneously explained by him, but which are every one correct as given by Ramsay, and erroneous as defined by himself, and every one taken also from that very glossary of Ruddiman;—having blamed him also for the paucity of words explained, although they are twice as numerous as those of which explanations are given by his lordship;—having, in short, on these grounds assumed that Ramsay was not skilled in the ancient Scottish dialect—although, as he made few mistakes in his interpretations, and his lordship, in the few additional words he explains, a great many, it may be doubted whether, of the two, Ramsay did not understand it much better than his lordship;—he concluded by saying that "his (Ramsay's) skill scarcely extended beyond the vulgar language spoken in the Lothians" at that day, and as every opinion of his lordship, especially with those young men—of whom Pinkerton was one—whose antiquarian studies he directed and aided, possessed an influence to which in general they were well entitled, it passed with the antiquarians of that age, as a dictum of his lordship, that the vulgar language of the Lothians—the language of Ramsay's and of Burns' writings—was a different dialect from the ancient vernacular of the kingdom, was a modern monstrosity, a recently formed slang or cant language, adapted for, and only used by, the lowest classes of the people.

In hazarding these observations—upon a subject to which we may again refer—it is not thereby intended to diminish the estimation in which the publication alluded to is held, but as the accusations above adverted to have, on the minds of not a few, operated injuriously to the fame and just reputation of our poet, we avail of the occasion to hint that in this respect also, his lordship is

amenable to the good-humoured remark of Sir Walter Scott, "*aliquando dormitat.*"(1) But in reality his lordship never meant to convey the idea here imputed to him. He knew too well, and has in too many instances expressed his conviction of, the non-identity of the ancient Scotch with the Anglo-Saxon, to be capable of misconstruction in this respect. And the relation in which the former stood to the modern Scotch does not appear to have engaged his attention. Not so however his followers.

Unable to reconcile the pretensions of the latter to antiquity with the fact that it was, in many respects, dissimilar to the idiom which *they* held as alone the true, the ancient Scotch—the language in which the long forgotten compositions of most of the poets of the sixteenth century—disentombed but recently by the industrious enterprise of Ramsay—had been embodied; unconscious of the truth that the latter idiom was itself not purely indigenous but intermixed with the produce of a foreign graft—from, it is true, a kindred or sister plant,—and that although for a time it flourished, and by its elevation overshadowed, yet it never covered entirely, much less extinguished, the offshoots from the native stock;—these antiquarians were not likely to be silenced by the explanations of Lord Woodhouselee, which, on the contrary, rather countenanced than contradicted their theory. Accordingly we find that, shortly after the publication of his lordship's Essay, another protegé of Lord Hailes, James Sibbald, an industrious writer, and a contemporary of Pinkerton, who purchased, about 1781, the circulating library which had belonged to Allan Ram-

(1) In allusion to Lord Hailes—"himself," says Sir Walter, "the most accurate of men"—after spelling Bannatyne's name correctly in the title-page, calling him in the first page of his preface, "one Ballantyne." —*Memorials of George Bannatyne, printed for the Bannatyne club*, 1829, p. 23.

say, and carried on the business of a bookseller in the Parliament Square of Edinburgh for many years thereafter;—and whose industry and antiquarian researches might, but for an unfortunate hypothesis, have enabled him to reach more sound conclusions,—following in the wake of Pinkerton, has assailed the modern vernacular on newer and more precise grounds.

"For the dialect which is now called Scottish," this writer remarks, "we are indebted to a few writers of depraved taste about the end of the 17th and beginning of the 18th centuries, who, instead of contributing, like Drummond of Hawthornden, to the improvement of the written language of the country, chose to write elegies upon pipers, and dying speeches of hounds and horses, in the familiar dialects of the meanest vulgar. If a native poet of Yorkshire, about the same period, had adopted the like absurd practice, his compositions, bating some slight difference in the orthography, might equally have been termed Scotch. This colloquial dialect of the 17th century seems to correspond with the written language of Gavin Douglas, stripped of the words which he and one or two contemporaries had thought proper to borrow from the French and Latin."(1) The confutation of the theory here advocated, contained in the elaborate dissertation of Dr. Jamieson, is known to most curious students; a few short extracts, however, from his preface to the dictionary of the Scottish language, will sufficiently indicate his deliberate opinion on the subject.

"I do not hesitate," says he, "to call that the Scottish language, which has generally been considered in no other light than as merely on a level with the different provincial dialects of the English. Without entering

(1) Chronicle of Scottish Poetry, by J. Sibbald, 1802, vol. IV. p. 45.

at present into the origin of the former, I am bold to affirm, that it has as just a claim to the designation of a peculiar language as most of the other languages in Europe. From the view here given of it to the public, in the form of an Etymological Dictionary, it will appear that it is not more nearly allied to the English, than the Belgic is to the German, the Danish to the Swedish, or the Portuguese to the Spanish. Call it a dialect, if you will; a dialect of the Anglo-Saxon it cannot be: for, from the Dissertation prefixed to the Dictionary, it must appear to the unprejudiced reader, that there is no good reason for supposing, that it was ever imported from the southern part of our island." "Many of our nation, not only in the higher, but even in the middle, ranks of life, now affect to despise all the terms or phrases peculiar to their country, as gross vulgarisms. This childish fastidiousness is unknown not only to intelligent foreigners, but to the learned in South Britain. Well assured that the peasantry are the living depositaries of the ancient language of every country, they regard their phraseology nearly in the same light in which they would view that of a foreign people." "There is a copiousness in the Scottish, of which the native of another kingdom can scarcely form an idea. Although I have spent my time in this quarter of the island, and devoted no inconsiderable attention to this subject; I find it necessary to acknowledge, that I have met with a variety of words and phrases, which, although in common use, I find it extremely difficult to explain." "Having resided for many years in the county of Angus, where the Old Scottish is spoken with as great purity as any where in North Britain, I collected a vast number of words unknown in the Southern and Western dialects of Scotland. Many of these I found to be classical terms in the languages of Iceland, Sweden, and Denmark."

By the written language of Gavin Douglas, to which, says Sibbald, the colloquial dialect of the 17th and 18th centuries seems to correspond, he refers more especially to his translation of Virgil, completed in 1513, and which was written in the vernacular tongue. Apart from its other merits, this rare work is on all hands admitted to contain more of the terms to this day regarded as peculiarly Scotch than any other of its epoch,—terms that, although still more or less familiar to all Scotsmen, having puzzled and misled the most erudite Anglo-Saxon etymologists, as is detailed in the preface to the edition of 1710, may be assumed never to have passed into the neighbouring kingdom—so that to this day, it forms the richest mine of illustration to the national lexicographer. Yet the Bishop published other poetry not written in pure Scotch but in the Scoto-Saxon or the poetical language of these ages. This dialect was not however that usually employed in documentary writings, or availed of in ordinary literary composition, still less was it the *spoken* language of the nation, that used between servant and master, mistress and page, noble and vassal, Scotchman and Scotchman. It is necessary that this distinction be kept in view, otherwise the conclusions drawn from the language occasionally employed by our older writers will lead to confusion and mistake.

Adopting the opinion of the learned author of the Dictionary of the Scottish language,—an opinion the more entitled to consideration, from its having been arrived at after he had long held a contrary hypothesis,—that the northern and eastern districts and a large portion of the south of Scotland were inhabited from the earliest period of which history takes notice, by the Picts,—that they held possession also of the north of England for more than a century previous to the conquest of the Angles,—that the Picts were Scandinavians,—that the Scandinavian

tongue was one branch of the Gothic or Teutonic speech, and the Saxon another,—that with a general affinity there was a separate formation of the Scotch and English languages,—that the Scotch was affected in its form and particularly in its becoming indeclinable through the influence of the French from which it borrowed largely, at a much earlier period than the English;—we are at the same time of opinion that it was at and from the time of Malcolm Canmore receiving occasional accessions of Saxon words from the south,—that in all probability a similar process was going on in that country by the importation of words from the north,—and that on the occasion—in the 14th century—of the formation of the so-called English language, the latter approached nearer, in its form at least, to the Scotch of that epoch than in any of its previous states.

It is probable indeed that, along with the vernacular, the Saxon—the intermediate—as it is called, and the early English, were respectively spoken at the courts of our earlier Scottish monarchs, and by their nobility. It is difficult otherwise to understand how intermarriages should take place, ambassadors and emigrants in multitudes be received, and intercourse maintained between the learned, and especially the ecclesiastics of these adjacent countries, unless this had been the case; and this common use, in Scotland and by the higher ranks, of the two dialects may in time have produced that mixture of both, or lingua franca, which is distinguished here by the name of Scoto-Saxon. From the records of our more ancient burghs and cities, and the names and designations of many of the members of these corporations, it appears that a large proportion of the mechanics and artisans,—and especially where ecclesiastical influence prevailed,—were originally natives of England, who were therefore likely to use and to perpetuate this mixed idiom.

Although,—to avoid the creation of a new term,—this idiom is here called Scoto-Saxon, it was at the same time, a dialect of a character more pure and simple, and therefore more approaching the ancient vernacular, than was the greater portion of the poetical language of these ages, which we have designated by the same word. It is probable however that it was not so in a greater degree than the prose compositions and colloquial language of the same epoch in England differed from the contemporary poetry of that country. In those ages, it was the aim of the 'makars' in both countries to distinguish themselves by the use of antiquated conventional and foreign words to a degree that modern use would not tolerate.

During several centuries previous to the Reformation, the great majority of the clergy of Scotland, secular and monastic—in these ages, almost the sole public teachers of youth—were Englishmen.(1) They were unacquainted with the vernacular or pure Scotch, and would therefore teach the youth in the Scoto-Saxon, which resembled their native tongue, and which the frequent residence of the Scotch nobles in England, the continuous migrations northward from the sister country, and the lengthened occupation of large portions of Scotland by the English armies, had half-domesticated on both sides of the Border. This accounts for its prevalence in Yorkshire and the northern counties of England, and for its being, in Scotland at least, in a great measure the medium of general knowledge. How far these influences —especially in the rural districts—acted upon the ancient vernacular, it is now, from the absence of authentic documents, impossible to say. But it is evident that

(1) Review of Billing's Baronial and Ecclesiastical Edifices, Quarterly Review, March 1849.

their operation would be slow, imperceptible, and local, and that over the greater portion of the kingdom the ancient language would continue to be spoken. But in poetry, which at that time was cultivated chiefly at court or in the halls of the nobles, the compound Scoto-Saxon we have described appears to have been the language chiefly employed. One reason for this may have been the general use of the alliterative style; another, the affectation of lofty and recondite language; but the most powerful would be the acceptability of this mixed idiom to the powerful and learned on both sides of the Border; and it may also be, that some of the earlier 'makars,' as Sir Richard Holland, Hutchon of the Awl Real, and Henryson,(1) although domesticated in Scotland, were in reality natives of England.

To return to Gavin Douglas and his translation of Virgil. Had it not been that in his estimation the cultivation of the Scoto-Saxon had proceeded at the period he resolved upon undertaking it, too far, and threatened the exclusion and probable extinction of the vernacular, —and that by the adoption on the part of the poets of his time who used the Saxo-Gothic of the many new terms — cart-loads of foreign words, as Skinner calls them—with which Chaucer, Gower, and other English poets of the beginning of the 15th century had, in that writer's opinion, vitiated the native English speech, and this to such a degree as nearly to assimilate the two

(1) In statements so condensed and gathered from various sources, it is difficult to quote authorities. As respects the birth-place of Sir R. Holland, we have the act of Parliament quoted in Laing's notice of him, prefixed to 'the Buke of the Howlet' published for the Bannatyne club, and passages in that poem itself, to encourage the conjecture. As respects Hutchon, it rests on his profession of a schoolmaster in a Royal Academy for the children of the nobility, and the absence of any other accounts of him. In the case of Henryson, also on a similar absence of information, his profession of ecclesiastic, his vocation of a schoolmaster in an abbey, and his being first noticed by English authors.

languages, or rather almost to convert the Scoto-Saxon into English, this evil was in danger of being increased, —it is probable that our worthy bishop would never have been stirred up by his accomplished kinsman to render this incomparable translation into the ancient, vernacular, Pictish tongue. His great contemporary William Dunbar, "the darling of the Scottish muses" as Sir Walter Scott calls him, and one of the greatest poets Scotland ever produced; having, as his humorous antagonist Kennedy upbraids him for, a strong predilection for England, where he had travelled and preached and studied in his youth;—having attached himself to the English princess Margaret, Queen of James IV., and to her ladies;—having even received gratuities, as his biographer Mr. D. Laing has rendered all but certain,(1) from Henry VII., for his verses on the occasion of her marriage;—and having carried his enthusiasm for the language of that country so far as to adopt it in some of these pieces,(2) and to call the Scoto-Saxon language of the court by its very name, as when addressing Chaucer he says:—

> "O reverend Chauser, rose of rethoures all,
> As in *oure tongue* ane flour imperial
> That raise in Brittane evir;"

and again:—

> "Was thou nocht of *our Inglis* all the licht;"

as also addressing Gower and Ludgate, English poets of the age of Chaucer, he adds:—

(1) Poems by William Dunbar, Edin., 1834.

(2) As for example, his address to the city of Aberdeen on the occasion of the Queen's visit; others might be named.

"Your angelic mouth most mellifluat
Our rude language hes cleir illuminat,
And has ourgilt *our speiche*, that imperfyte
Stude."(1)

and in the celebrated "Flyting" thus addresses Kennedy:—

"I have on me a pair of Lowthiane hipps
Sill fairer *Inglis* mak, and mair perfyte
Than thou can bleber with thy Carrick lipps;"(2)

it is not likely that the patriotic dignitary of Dunkeld would have furnished us with that distinctive account of the *nationality* of the language into which he rendered his version of the Mantuan poet which now serves as a landmark in its history. For example: had it been composed in the language *usually* employed in poetry, he would not have deemed it necessary to say as he does of it in his dedication to Lord Sinclair:—

"To his nobility and estate
Quhatso it be, this buke I dedicate
Written in the langage of *Scottis* natioun;"(3)

nor, unless the practice had obtained of employing an idiom wherein English was mixed with Scotch, would he have been so careful to inform the reader that *he* had abstained as much as in his power from the use of the former tongue:—

(1) The Golden Terge.
(2) Flyting of Dunbar and Kennedy. Evergreen, vol. II. p. 53.
(3) Preface, line 49—51. Edition 1710.

"I set my besy pane
(As that I couth) to mak it brade and plane
Kepand no sodroun,(1) bot *oure awin* langage,
And speke as I lerned quhen I wes ane page,
Na yet so clene all sudroun I refuse
Bot sum worde I pronunce as nychboure dois,(2)
Like as in Latine bene Grewe termes sum
So me behuffit quhilum or be dum,
Sum bastard Latyne, Frensche, or Ynglis ois,(3)
Quhare scant was *Scottis*, I had nane other chois;
Not that oure toung is in the seluin (4) skant,
Bot for that I the fouth of langage want." (5)

That it was principally intended to be read by the *masses* of his countrymen, appears from his parting exclamation, "aganis detractouris and uncurtas redaris," when addressing his author he says:—

"Now sal thou with every gentil Scot be kend,
And to unletteryt folk be red on hicht
That erst was bot with clerkis comprehend;(6)

and in the farewell greeting to Lord Sinclair, speaking of the work of Virgil,

"Reducit, as I couth, in till *our* tong;"

He adds:—

"Be glaide Enee, the bell is halely rong,
Thy fame is blawn, thy prowess and renowne
Divulgate ar, and song fra toun to toun. (7)

(1) Southern, viz. the English language.
(2) As neighbour does.
(3) To use some bastard English, &c.
(4) Same. Not that the Scotch lacks the same terms, but that he is not able to command them in their abundance.
(5) Protestation to Preface, l. 4 to 14.
(6) P. 486, l. 2 to 4. (7) P. 483, l. 29 to 32.

At the same time, it was also intended for the use of the nobility, gentry, and scholars, for in the same passage, and in reply to a supposed query as to the object for which the work had been undertaken, he answers,

> "That Virgil micht in till oure langage be
> Red loude and plane by your lordschip and me
> And uther gentill companyeonis quha sa list;"(1)

and even anticipates that it will be used in the schools throughout the kingdom, or at least by their teachers,—

> "Ane uther profit of oure buke I merk
> That it sall be repute ane needful werk
> To them that wald Virgill to children expone;"(2)
> "Thank me tharof, maisteris of grammer skulis
> Quhare ye sit teichand on youre benkis and stulis;"(3)

which could not have been the case unless it were then the language of all classes of the community. As well in virtue of its purity and nationality of language as its remarkable excellence of execution, this work has commanded the attention and drawn forth the admiration of successive generations; carefully prepared editions of it have at various times appeared both in England and Scotland; and learned men have united in commendations of its author. On the other hand, his contemporary Dunbar, admittedly possessed of more versatility and range of genius, and greatly more appreciated in his lifetime by his court-companions, yet,—in how great a degree owing to the Scoto-Saxon dialect,—obscure, conventional, and in some respects intelligible only to a class—in which he wrote, we know not—"although," to

(1) P. 482, l. 43 to 45.
(2) P. 481, l. 53 to 55.
(3) P. 482, l. 5, 6.

use the words of his biographer, "his writings continued for a time to be admired and imitated by succeeding poets, yet, he was doomed to such total and absolute neglect during the long period which elapsed between the year 1530, when Sir David Lindsay mentions him among the poets then deceased, and the year 1724, when Allan Ramsay published a selection of his poems, that with one solitary exception, no allusion, not even so much as the mere mention of his name, can be discovered in the whole compass of our literature."(1)

Notwithstanding its affectation of English, the Scoto-Saxon poetry of the age of James IV., was not without a considerable intermixture of idiomatic Scotch, and in Dunbar's pieces, even such as were intended for an English audience, many words occur that are not to be found in any Anglo-Saxon contemporary. Indeed the language of that epoch was of a shifting and variable character.

Had the two nations kept distinct, it is not improbable that, in course of time, the Scoto-Saxon would have been absorbed in or ceased to be distinguishable from the vernacular. It had indeed towards the end of the 16th century gradually assumed a more national character, and even entered into *colloquial* use. Mr. Chalmers, in his edition of Sir David Lindsay's works, has attempted to prove that all the words to be met with in a portion of the writings of that poet,—selected by him with this object,—are to be found in English writers, but with indifferent success; because many of the words adduced by him as such had become quite obsolete in the English of Sir David's time; and although Sir David's language was the Scoto-Saxon, or that which approached most

(1) Memoirs of William Dunbar by David Laing, prefixed to a collection of his Poems. Edin., 1834.

nearly to the Southern dialect, yet it had absorbed a considerable portion of the vernacular tongue. To have established the identity of the two languages, Chalmers should have selected Dunbar's 'Flyting,' or Douglas' 'Virgil,' for his comparisons.

It is deserving of remark that the old vernacular of Douglas kythes out in the course of history as the colloquial tongue of our countrymen in many anecdotes. When the Scotch called the elder Baliol, the father of the competitor of Bruce,—in allusion to his cowardice, as they esteemed his subservience to Edward,—toom tabard, or empty jacket, they made use of two words unknown—the latter in the sense here used at least—to the Anglo-Saxon of the South—the one being Danish, the other old French. When Kirkpatrick explained to Bruce his intention to make secure the death of Baliol, saying, "I mak sicker," and returning to plunge his dagger in the traitor's breast, he used vernacular Scotch, not Anglo-Saxon. When James VI. called his attendant Ferguson, who had contrived to read him a lecture on his forgetfulness of his long services, 'a pawky loon,' he used, although he had been then many years settled on the throne of England, two words, one of which at least Chalmers would in vain search for in the ancient lexicons of the South. They were not vulgar words, apart from their being used by royal lips, yet they are the common Scotch of the present day. The "Scottis poesie," of which that monarch gave ensamples in his "Rewlls and Canticles," is not written in the language of Shakespere or Johnson, nor is it the *spoken* language of the preceding anecdotes. It is the Scoto-Saxon of that period.

Soon after the accession of Charles I. the Scoto-Saxon or poetic language of the country disappeared, as if at once. It was an artificial language, and it sank to rise

no more. Yet it is this language which Pinkerton and Sibbald blame Ramsay and his contemporaries for not having copied. It is thus with antiquarians. Had Ramsay lived in the days of Dunbar, he would have written in the living, spoken, language of that epoch, and not in the quaint dialect of the court. Yet even that living dialect, after upwards of two centuries, could not be repeated by any successor. As well might we blame Cowper for not writing in the language of Chaucer or of Sydney. Languages like rivers can never flow backward. Of the truth of this the attempts of Pinkerton himself furnish a sufficient proof. Although clothed with a false history and an adventitious interest, the pieces "dressed in the garb of antiquity" which he attempted to palm upon the public only smell of the lamp and never could have existed in any age of Scottish literature.

About the time now referred to, by the publication of the present version of the Bible, and the adoption of its language and orthography in the seminaries of education, the Scoto-Saxon style of prose heretofore used in Scotland in law writings, in history, and in religious works, gradually fell into disuse. Even the more familiar and almost colloquial language of private and epistolary correspondence conformed to the newer orthography and diction. In his interesting work on the ancient family whose name he bears, Lord Lindsay, introducing the narrative of one of the eminent ladies of his race, Lady Ann Bernard, herself a poetess and author of one of the most touching pieces in the modern Scottish, "Auld Robin Gray," makes her ladyship thus allude to these alterations in the national speech :—

"The generation we are now dwelling upon," that of Sir David Lindsay of Balcarres, "was the last that wrote the pure old Scottish dialect,—the succeeding one wrote English; you will see the change at work in the idiom and

expression of many of the familiar epistles throughout this work. Various causes contributed to this;—the sudden growth and richness of English literature was one; but another far more powerful and controlling, was the migration of the court to England. Just as the old Provençal, the language of love and chivalry, was gradually abandoned by the upper classes after the transfer of the sovereignty to Paris, so the Scottish, an idiom richer in some respects than the English, more picturesque and racy in expression, and more Italian in its sound, was abandoned at once in literature, and gradually disused in the ordinary speech of society. Half a century after the accession of King James effected this change,—a mournful but inevitable one. Till that era the sister languages, like two noble streams descending from the same distant fount, held a distinct but parallel course, now rushing confusedly through ravines and gullies, now expanding into calm clear lakes, which Cowley would have named after Barbour, Dunbar, Douglas—Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespere; but then, instead of uniting into one broad stream, and rolling majestically and melodiously on together, the Scottish tongue, like the ancient river of Palmyra, sank into the earth and was lost; and the Virgil of Douglas, the Thistle and Rose of Dunbar, the Bruce of Barbour—those temples upreared by Scottish genius to the Scottish muse—survive only, like the solitary ruins of the city of Zenobia, to mark the scene which it once fertilized.—I do not forget Burns," she might have added Ramsay,—"but we must look back three hundred years, when Scottish was spoken by the wise, the experienced, the refined, in the presence chamber of Holyrood, as well as on the braes of Yarrow—for the golden age of the Scottish language and literature."(1)

(1) Lives of the Lindsays, vol. II. p. 57.

The national historian Robertson also expresses his regret that the language of Scotland had been so much neglected. "If the two nations," he says, "had continued distinct, each might have retained idioms and forms of speech peculiar to itself; and these, rendered fashionable by the example of a court, and supported by the authority of writers of reputation, might have been considered in the same light with the varieties occasioned by the different dialects in the Greek tongue; might have been considered as beauties; and, in many cases, might have been used promiscuously by the authors of both nations. But, by the accession, the English naturally became the sole judges and lawgivers in language, and rejected, as solecisms, every form of speech to which their ear was not accustomed."(1) "Our best writers," remarks Dr. Jamieson in reference to this subject, "have felt the disagreeable consequences of the national servility. No man, educated in Scotland, can entirely divest himself of its peculiar idioms. Even the learned writer quoted above, Hume, and many others, who have justly acquired celebrity in other respects, have not escaped censure, because they have been *found guilty* of using national *barbarisms*."(2)

To the introduction of the modern orthography and diction succeeded an age of theological controversy. Then uprose the compound language of that period—a scholastic English—the language of the Westminster divines in the pulpit;—a mixture of the English and the *vernacular* in the camp and in diplomacy. By the Restoration both were swept away, and nothing better substituted in their place. If the language of Shakespere and Milton had penetrated slowly into Scotland, that

(1) Robertson's Hist. of Scotland, B. viii. *ad fin.*
(2) Preface to Dictionary of the Scottish language.

of Dryden and Waller—more "new-fangled" still—made even slower progress. In despair of finding in the fleeting idioms of the day, a permanent medium for transmitting them to posterity, and partly in dislike of England, her learned men had had recourse to Latin in which to embody their refined and lofty thoughts. "The tendency of the age," says Lord Lindsay speaking of that epoch, "was to classic composition, and indeed till that age, the unsettled and shifting character both of the Scotch and English characters seemed to justify the creed so beautifully expressed by Waller:—

> "Poets that lasting marble seek,
> Must carve in Latin and in Greek;
> We write in sand—our language grows,
> And, like the sand, our work o'erflows." (1)

Dr. Johnson has pronounced of their compositions in that tongue at this epoch, that they would "do honour to any nation." But Latin could not suffice for the daily intercourse of life. The vernacular which for a time had been overlooked, again became in a greater degree a written language. If the "Presbyterian Eloquence Displayed" be not throughout a libel, it had reascended into the pulpit. It has been stated by a gentleman whose antiquarian research cannot be doubted, that at the beginning of the 18th century the gentry had become so fond of it that no minister who did not employ it was acceptable to them. (2)

The Scotch of Ramsay, it may be further remarked, could not have been the dialect of the meanest vulgar of his day, or it would not have been so much cultivated in poetry as it then was, by the educated aristocracy of

(1) Lives of the Lindsays, vol. II. p. 6.
(2) Maidment's Scottish Elegiac Verses 1529—1729. Edin. 1842, p. 96.

the country. Sir W. Scott of Thirlstane, Francis Sempill of Beltrees, Hamilton of Gilbertfield, Hamilton of Bangour, Crawford of Auchinames, Sir John Clerk of Pennecuick, the illustrious Forbes of Culloden, Lady Wardlaw of Pitferran, and Lady Grizzel Baillie of Jerviswood;—these were a few of the contemporaries of our poet who composed in this ancient expressive and euphonious language; and he would lack both judgment and gallantry who would call in question the learning of those of the one sex, or the purity and grace of those of the other, or the high rank of all the parties whose names appear on this list. They cultivated it because it was *their* language, that of their forefathers, endeared to them by a thousand associations, richer, more adapted to their noble use of it than that of the English poets of the day, which in their eyes must have seemed a strange tongue, garnished with recently introduced Gallicisms. (1)

The enthusiastic reception given to the writings of our poet on their first appearance not by the general public alone but by the most distinguished of his fellow-citizens, proves that their language was not then reputed a dialect of the meanest vulgar. The list of subscribers to the earliest collection of his works published in 1721 in an expensive quarto volume,—after they had been circulated in separate and much cheaper forms,—comprehended, we are informed, "all who were either eminent or fair in Scotland." (2) The Scotch are still a careful people and know the value of money. At

(1) "Lord Hailes remarks, that, in one comedy, 'Marriage a la mode,' Dryden, in the reign of Charles II., printed the following words as pure French newly imported. *Amour, billet-doux, caprice, chagrin, conversation, double-entendre, embarrassed, fatigue, figure, foible, gallant, good graces, grimace, incendiary, levee, maltreated, rallied, repartee, ridicule, tender, tour;* with several others, which are now considered as natives."—*Ancient Scottish Poems*, 1770, p. 228.

(2) Lives of Eminent Scotsmen. Lond. 1821, vol. I. p. 78, *ante* vol. I. p. 19.

that period they were much less wealthy than now. But on occasions when their national feelings are roused they can be liberal and even generous. It has been said that when the first *collected* edition of Burns' poems appeared, farm-labourers parted with half-a-year's wages in order to possess a copy. But the nine hundred pounds of profit cleared by that publication, magnificent though it be, was not relatively so large a sum as the four hundred guineas produced, half-a-century earlier, by Ramsay's *aristocratic* quarto, which "was sufficient to purchase as much land in Scotland as would now produce a respectable income."(1) This was before he had published his "Songs" or his "Gentle Shepherd." If Yorkshire produce as many of the local aristocracy who write in its dialect as Scotland has done, or if a competency for life should be realized by the sale of a single volume composed in it, then indeed it may be said that its idiom is not a dialect of the vulgar but the language of the whole country.

If the approbation of the most eminent as well as the most competent of the land—awarded not after its publication but during its progress—be conclusive as to the fitness of its phraseology, that approval has been given to the Gentle Shepherd under circumstances seldom if ever occurring in the case of any similar work. A group of noblemen and gentlemen—two of them afterwards intrusted by government with the charge of Scotland,(2) —comprising the members of that social union already referred to which, on account of their great respectability, received from the citizens of Edinburgh the name of the

(1) Lives of Eminent Scotsmen. Lond. 1821, vol. I. p. 78.

(2) 1. Duncan Forbes of Culloden, then Lord-advocate of Scotland, and afterwards Lord-president of the Court of Session. The room in which he used to sleep at New Hall is still called the Advocate's room. 2. Sir Gilbert Elliott of Minto, ancestor of the Earl of Minto, one of the senators of the College of Justice.

Worthy Club,(1) seeking to vary their weekly game of golf on Leith links, and dinner at Mrs. Forbes', by betaking themselves to similar exercises in the country, drew themselves together frequently in the summer to New Hall on the Pentland hills, the seat of Sir David Forbes, and of his nephew, John Forbes, Esq., advocate-depute of Scotland, one of their brotherhood. At this hospitable mansion "which," says Mr. Tytler an eye-witness who there passed his infancy, "was the resort of many of the literati of that time,"(2) they met, along with other distinguished men, our poet Allan Ramsay, who was in the practice of paying it an annual visit. Here, whilst enjoying each other's company in the parlour which still bears the name of the Club-room, now adorned with their portraits painted by one of their members, year by year they cheered on our poet in his labours, aided him with their advices and criticisms, urged him to extend his poem to the full length of five acts, and in token of their approbation and admiration had themselves and him honoured by the painting on the ceiling of their assembly, representing him in the act of reciting to them its verses, long before they were given to the world.(3) "I well remember," says Mr. Tytler, "to have heard Ramsay recite as his own production," at this mansion and before these auditors, "different scenes of the Gentle Shepherd, particularly the two first, before it was printed."—"I carried it," says Ramsay in his note to the first scene of this pastoral, in the quarto

(1) William Aikman, Esq. of Cairney, portrait-painter; John Stewart, Esq. of Innernerity; Capt. David Kennedy of Craig, and Dr. Clerk, an eminent physician of Edinburgh, whose likeness is amongst those in Surgeon's Hall, done by Sir John Medina; were of the number.

(2) Baron Sir John Clerk, neighbour and cousin of Mr. Forbes, and Dr. Alexander Pennicuick, his neighbour and associate in some literary works, were regular guests on these occasions.

(3) *Ante* p. 301. Pennycuick's Works, p. 25.

edition of 1728, "the length of five acts, at the desire of some persons of distinction." With an air of confidence, as satisfied that the party he was addressing was familiar with and able to decide as to its fitness, he appeals respecting its phraseology to a Lady, one of the most elegant and accomplished as well as the loveliest of the female aristocracy of the age.(1) "If my Patroness," says he, in his dedication to the Countess of Eglinton, "says the shepherds speak as they ought, and that there are several flowers that beautify the rural wild, I shall have good reason to think myself safe from the awkward censure of some pretending judges that condemn before examination."(2)

In a poem by Hamilton of Bangour, entitled "A Gentleman going to travel," printed, apparently for the first time, in 1760, that is some years after our poet's death, he is classed, for the elegance of his phraseology, with Addison, Congreve, and Pope:—

"Such Addison, and such with laurel crowned
Immortal Congreve, such the muses grace
Mæonian Pope; nor do the nine refuse
To rank with these Fergusian nightingale,
Untaught with wood-notes wild, sweet Allan hight;
Whether on the flower-blushing bank of Tweed,

(1) Dr. Johnson and his biographer visited the Countess of Eglinton, at her jointure-house of Auchans, in 1773, when in her 84th year. Boswell describes her figure as "majestic, her manners high bred, her reading extensive, and her conversation elegant." The learned lexicographer expressed himself as delighted with the visit.

(2) Vol. II. p. 37. In Chalmers' and all other biographies of our Poet, and accounts of this poem, it is stated that the dedicatory poem by Hamilton of Bangour, addressed "To the Countess of Eglinton," (vol. II. p. 40,) was prefixed to the first and second editions of the Gentle Shepherd. This statement appears doubtful, in reference to the first edition, which was published in 1725. Copies of it are now extremely rare. In the copy possessed by James Maidment, Esq., there is no poetical address, but only the prose one here quoted from.—*Poems and Songs of Hamilton of Bangour. Edin., Stevenson*, 1850, p. 159.

Or Clyde or Tay's smooth winding stream his muse
Chooseth to reside, or o'er the snowy hills,
Benlomond or proud Mormount, all the day
Clad in Tartana varied garb she roves,
To hear of kings' and heroes' godlike deeds;
Or, if delighted on the knee she lies
Of lovely nymph, as happy lap-dog graced,
Intent to soothe the Scottish damsel's ear,
Cochrane or Hamilton, with pleasing song
Of him who sad beneath the withered branch
Sat of Traquair,(1) complaining of his lass;
Or the fond maid, that o'er the watery brink
Wept sleepless night and day, still wafting o'er
Her flying love from Aberdour's fair coast."

The universal popularity of Ramsay's poetry, by an inevitable mischance, has proved injurious to his lasting reputation. Whatever dropped from his pen in verse came to be valued, to be sought after, and through one or other of the instrumentalities of the press, to find its way to the world. In all the collections of his writings now extant are to be found no less than four pieces,(2) in connection with the doings of the Royal archer company of Scotland, of questionable merit, which were never published by him, but inserted very shortly after their composition in a volume of their memorabilia, issued for the first and last time by that ancient and respectable body.(3) Odes, elegies, addresses, and advices of similar character, either never printed by him, or, if published, intended only as a passing tribute of esteem and gratitude, have, by being mixed up with his other just claims upon posterity, impaired the effect of their appeal. Dur-

(1) Bush aboon Traquair.
(2) Vol. I. pp. 213. 16, 19, 20.
(3) Poems in English and Latin on the Archers and Royal Company of Archers. By several hands. Edin., 1726. Ramsay's pieces were furnished in 1724.

ing nearly twenty years of the latter part of his life, "although he had no desire to add to these claims by new productions, he continued occasionally to write epistles in verse, and other short pieces, as he had done before, for the entertainment of his private friends. When urged by some of them to give some more of his works to the press, he said that he was more inclined, if it were in his power, to recall much of what he had already written, and that if half his printed books were burnt, the other half, like the Sybil's books, would become more valuable by it."(1) Still more deeply was this feeling entertained by his son, who hesitated not to express it in a manner more emphatic than respectful to his father's memory. On one occasion, in London, and in the house of Lady Strange, widow of the celebrated engraver of that name—a lady whose kindness to her countrymen and predilection for Scotland will long be remembered—he is said to have declared that if he could purchase every copy of his father's writings, even at the cost of a thousand pounds, he would commit them to the flames. "Indeed, Sir," replied the Lady, misunderstanding his meaning, "then let me tell you that if you could, and should do so, your labour would be lost, for I can," says she, "repeat from memory *every word* of the Gentle Shepherd, and were you to consume every copy of it, I would write out that matchless poem with my own hand, and cause it to be printed at my own charges."(2) There is reason to fear indeed that the refined and somewhat effeminate taste of the son shrunk from associating himself with the plainer and more simple character of his

(1) Lives of Eminent Scotsmen. London, 1821.

(2) We are indebted for this anecdote to the venerable George Thomson, Esq., the correspondent of Burns and publisher of his finest songs, now living and in the 93d year of his age, who had it from — Macgowan, Esq., a gentleman formerly well known in this city, as having been told him by Lady Strange herself.

father, and that when discussing politics with Bute or Newcastle, talking of taste with Chesterfield, or of painting with Royalty, he felt somewhat ashamed of that parent whose munificence bestowed on him an education, in scholarship not to speak of art, not often attained by the noblest in the land, and whose enterprising industry left him a fortune not inferior even to these accomplishments. We say not inferior to his attainments, for the party who now claims the authorship of the memoir of his life by Allan Cunningham,(1) and who from his position about him must have had access to a knowledge of the fact, asserts "on the best authority, that before young Ramsay had the luck to become a favourite of George III.," that is, shortly after his father's death, "he was possessed of no less than forty thousand pounds;" and those who know how painting was remunerated in Scotland, even in the palmier days of Raeburn and Allan, will concur in opinion, that a young man who had been twice married, without receiving a dowry with either partner, who had twice travelled to Rome, remaining three years on the first occasion, who was fastidious in his eating and dress, and not overly assiduous in his labours, could not, even at the age of 45 or 50, have amassed anything like that sum by his profession, but must have inherited it, or by far the larger portion of it, as we know he did various properties and bonds for money lent, from his frugal and industrious father.

The English literati are now convinced, that an acquaintance with modern Scotch is necessary to the understanding of many terms in their own ancient writings which, formerly borrowed from the vernacular of the

(1) Richard Ramsay Reinagle, Esq., R. A., son of Philip Reinagle, a favourite pupil of young Allan. This gentleman complains (Lit. Gazette, May 1850) that Allan Cunningham has not acknowledged his aid in this memoir. We think the note B. Painters, vol. V. p. 45, is quite explicit.

Picts, and for a time common to the literature of both countries, have long been obsolete in the South.(1) The poetry of Burns, the prose of Scott, the variety of works of Scottish antiquity that have been published during the present century, have at last made the Scottish dialect to become as it were a portion of the great and noble English tongue. Its ballads and its phrases are to be met with in the most recent, most polished, and most popular literature of the South.(2) In the most recent and expensively got up English dictionaries, several hundred Scotch words are to be found as now become classic and authorized. The opinion expressed by Ramsay, in the preface to the last edition of his works, as to the advantages of a perfect fusion of the two languages, is thus being verified, as it is being made, on both sides of the Tweed, the subject of spontaneous experiment. "That I have expressed my thoughts in my native dialect, was not only inclination, but the desire of my best and wisest friends; and most reasonable, since good imagery, just similes, and all manner of ingenious thoughts, in a well-laid design, disposed into numbers, is poetry. Then good poetry may be in any language. But some nations speak rough, and their words are confounded with a multitude of hard consonants which make the numbers unharmonious: besides, their language is scanty, which makes a disagreeable repetition of the same words. These are no defects in ours; the pronunciation is liquid and sonorous, and much fuller than the English of which we are masters, by being taught it in our schools and daily reading it; which being added to all our own native words,

(1) Toom, anciently Tume, *empty*, is found in R. Brune (temp. Edwd. 3d.), but was by Hearne, in his Glossary, rendered *shut, enclosed*. Sib, *related by blood*, occurs in P. Plowman, and was explained by Warton, *mother*. Other words might be added, still in familiar use in Scotland, of which the correct significations were unknown to English scholars.

(2) See Shirley, by Currer Bell, a popular novel published in 1849-50.

of eminent significancy, makes our tongue be far the completest; for instance, I can say, *an empty house, a toom barrel, a boss head,* and *a hollow heart.*"

Most of the English compositions of Drummond of Hawthornden,—which Sibbald would rather have had the writers of the earlier modern Scotch poetry to imitate,—still remain unpublished, nor is it to be wondered at, for they add little of grace or poetry to the language; whilst these writings, embodying in their nervous language the thoughts and descriptive of the manners of an ancient and free people, hold, and will continue to hold, a place in the world's estimation, contemporaneous with that of the country whose individuality they establish and perpetuate.

The distinction attempted to be drawn by Pinkerton between the language employed by Ramsay and that of the authoress of 'Hardyknute,' arises from his ignorance of the history of the publication of that "fine morsel of heroic poetry," as Bishop Percy calls it. It had originally appeared in a different dress—the *common* Scotch of his detestation,—and it received from Ramsay himself the quaint orthography,—no doubt with that Lady's approbation as she was alive when he published it in 1724,—which so excited the admiration and stimulated the unhappy taste for imitation and alteration of this inconsiderate critic.

The original edition of the poem referred to—that of 1719—has lately been reprinted in "The Ballads and Songs of Ayrshire."(1) It is in the common or modern Scotch, and it wants twelve stanzas contained in that which is now familiar to the public as first published by Ramsay in the "Evergreen." In the third edition of the "Reliques" of ancient poetry,(2) Bishop Percy gives

(1) Vol. II. p. 38.

(2) 1775, vol. II. p. 111.

in a note an interesting account of the additions made to it after its original publication, copied from a MS. of Dr. Clerk,—a friend of Ramsay's and member of the Worthy Club,—but that doc ment still leaves various alterations unaccounted for, which may subsequently have been made by Ramsay, or may have been suggested by him to Lady W. They are evidently decided improvements, and two stanzas contained in Dr. C.'s MS. which, says the Bishop—and all will agree with him—are of inferior merit, are left out in Ramsay's edition. In a letter to Geo. Paton, Nov. 17, 1770,(1) his lordship says the edition published in the "Evergreen" is that "with the latest improvements."

We may here remark that the Editor of the curious *brochure* here quoted from—viz. The Letters of Bishop Percy—takes upon him in a note upon this passage to state, that the text of the poem referred to—viz of Hardyknute—was unwarrantably altered by Ramsay, in order to give it an antique appearance. How does he know that it was unwarrantably altered? Surely if Ramsay was warranted to add, for the first time, twelve stanzas to this ballad—and, as has been ascertained, even to make alterations upon the original MS. of these—he might also have got permission to modify the orthography, or what is quite as likely, might have so modified it at the request of Lady W. herself. In fact such a change in the orthography was indispensable in order to its admission into the "Evergreen." As Lady W. and her friends appear from the first to have been desirous that it should go forth as an antique ballad, and with that view had caused her brother-in-law, Sir John Bruce of Kinross, to transmit the MS. to Lord Binning, with a statement of its having been found in an old vault at Dunfermline, it is plain

(1) Bishop Percy's Letters, &c., Edin., 1830, p. 16.

that she would feel greatly obliged to any one who, like Ramsay, was able so to transmute the modern spelling as to give a colour to her story. So many of these uncharitable censures of our poet are scattered throughout the literature of the last fifty years, that some notice of them seems necessary in order to save his reputation from being destroyed—as indeed in a great measure it has been—by *piecemeal* accusations.

The charge of buffoonery preferred by Pinkerton is unworthy of serious notice. This malignant libeller, as all his writings show, was as ignorant as he was innocent of either humour or wit. The Chesterfield philosophy was then in favour with the class that aimed at being thought refined; the motto

Ridendo castigat mores

was by them sought to be banished from poetry; and literature and comic satire if addressed to the masses was pronounced by them ale-house buffoonery. Pinkerton, who was not only indecent in his private talk but advocated obscenity in his works, when he met with Ramsay's anonymous writings—masked as they sometimes were in ancient spelling—could enjoy their humour and admire their conviviality. The banquetting of the ancient gods in the "Vision"—the nearest approach to buffoonery in his whole writings—he pronounced exquisite, and it reminded him of the heathen deities in Midas. The mishaps of the goodman of Auchtermuchty, as supplemented by our Poet—coarse enough, as the readers of that ballad know—he pronounced most genuine and characteristic. In the very work wherein he vilifies our poet he—unconsciously—inserts various of his poems. He only affected the Chesterfield philosophy when it gave him an occasion of assailing a more suc-

cessful suitor of the muses, and thought he preserved his consistency by being lewd only with the learned, while he censured those who presumed to be comic with the vulgar. The gentle chastisement bestowed upon him in the earlier part of this work, for his coarse assault on this head, would have put most defamers to the blush, but this was a trait of virtue of which he was never known to be guilty. (1)

It is unnecessary to state, that the charge of having put rhyming titles to the old poems published in 'The Evergreen' is entirely devoid of truth. The full and accurate details of the contents of the MSS. from which these poems were copied given by Mr. David Laing in the Memorials of George Bannatyne,—published by the well-known club of that name,—demonstrate—as the MSS. themselves in the Advocates' Library will confirm—that, with one unimportant exception, these colophons and headings were faithfully transcribed from the documents themselves. In bringing forward this charge, Pinkerton may have sinned in ignorance. Lord Hailes having in a subsequent transcript (2) omitted these prefixes, Pinkerton took it upon him to attribute their composition to Ramsay. In asserting, however, that the closes of "that day," &c., in the stanzas of Ferguson, were unknown to the old poets, and were introduced by the *ignorance* of Allan, he not only said what was untrue, but what he must have known to be so. These *closes* were introduced and employed both by the author of 'Christ's Kirk on the Green,' and by Alexander Scot in his "Justing betwixt William Adamson and Johne Syme," and were never used by Ramsay himself except in his continuations of the former poem.

(1) Vol. I. p. 66. 25. 13. (2) Ancient Scots Poems, 1770.

However it may be with respect to the latter of these poems, Pinkerton—having at the time he wrote this accusation, edited, on three separate occasions, two distinct versions of 'Christ's Kirk on the Green,' and otherwise bestowed extraordinary care upon that poem;—and having also in one of these versions quoted a passage from a letter of Bishop Percy to that very effect (1)—was perfectly familiar with the otherwise notorious fact, that in every edition of that poem from 1691 downward to his own the closes referred to had been inserted as given by Ramsay. Without caring to ascertain whether or not they were faithfully copied from the Bannatyne MSS.—although of the contents of these MSS. he gives a list in the work itself where this charge appears—and without reflecting that even if not,—as however they were,—truly extracted from that collection, they could not have been invented by Ramsay, since Bishop Gibson had published them before Ramsay was old enough to write,—his unaccountable desire to injure the reputation of the former, and to exalt the text of the Maitland MSS.,—in which the burden of which they form a part is differently given, and which it was his pleasure to prefer,—led him to commit the egregious blunder of falsely imputing their use, past, present, and future, to the effects of Ramsay's *ignorance*. After charging our poet with having composed headings or "colophons" which he had faithfully transcribed from his originals, and with having invented "closes" which he had accurately taken from his copies, it is not to be wondered at that he should further commit himself, in the passage above referred to, by saying with his usual want of taste and truth, "there certainly never was a more ignorant or rash transcriber of ancient poetry than Allan Ramsay. He seems to have

(1) Select Scottish Poems, 2d edition London, 1783, Vol. ii. p. 173.

considered it as very much his own property, and to have exercised his own profession upon it by shaving, curling, and powdering it at his will and pleasure."(1) This is the same party who, in boldly substituting a line of his own for one of Lady Wardlaw's in his version of Hardyknute, says, "Many such are corrected in this impression from comparing different rehearsals, and still more from conjecture. Absurdities the Editor made not the smallest scruple to correct, as he always imagined that common sense might have its use even in emendatory criticism."(2) And it is of him as a transcriber of ancient poetry that the accurate David Laing thus writes in reference to his version of the Howlat:— "I have not thought it necessary to trouble either the reader or myself in pointing out the errors that have crept into that edition, (Pinkerton's,) which indeed without any sort of exaggeration may perhaps be termed the most inaccurate copy of any old Scotch poem which has in our days been submitted to the public."(3)

It must be confessed that Ramsay has had but scant justice done him by his countrymen for his meritorious efforts in introducing to the public the long forgotten compositions of the Scottish "Makars." Let the case of this very poem, "Christ's Kirk on the Green," be cited as an instance. In editing this poem Ramsay had only two authorities before him, viz. Bishop Gibson's, published at Oxford in 1691, and the version in the Bannatyne MSS. It is evident he took great pains to extract the true reading from a careful recension of these two apparently independent versions. He purged it of the absurd alterations of Watson's edition, published in

(1) Select Scottish Poems, 2d edition. London, 1783, Vol. ii. p. 173.
(2) Idem, p. 125.
(3) Appendix to 'The Book of the Howlat,' printed for the Bannatyne Club. Edin, 1823, p. 10.

1706; he restored, as far as the state of society—then long unaccustomed to it—would permit, the ancient orthography; and he certainly presented the best edition —with exception perhaps of Mr. Tytler's, which was only a more literal transcript of the orthography of the Bannatyne MSS.—that had appeared till that of Chalmers in 1824. In 1786, Pinkerton gave to the world a *third* authority in a transcript from the version contained in the Maitland MSS. Antiquarians now assume that the true text is alone to be gathered from a comparison of the Bannatyne with the Maitland MSS., correcting both occasionally from Gibson. Without offering an opinion on this point, we ask how Ramsay can be blamed for making the best use he could of the authorities then known to him? It is evident from the reference made to it by Ruddiman in his Preface to the Glossary of Gavin Douglas, published in 1710, that that distinguished scholar believed Bishop Gibson's version to be an authority, and indeed George Chalmers not unfrequently corrects both the MSS. by Gibson in his "accurate" text. But he does Ramsay great injustice, by accusing him of interpolating where it is evident by his own notes he only follows Gibson, and even sometimes where there is no interpolation at all.

For example, in the line—'Poetic Remains of the Scottish Kings,' p. 165—

"He thought one cried, have at him!"

Chalmers says, "The Mait. and Ban. MSS. have both this line, the sixth of the stanza; and the sixth in place of the fourth. In Gibson they stand as they are given above; and as the text required. Here Sibbald again takes the *interpolation* of Ramsay for the reading of the Ban. MS." In the 'Evergreen' Ramsay has it,

"He thocht ane cry'd, haif at him!"

or exactly as Gibson and as Chalmers, with the difference of spelling in the latter case. Where, then, is the *interpolation?* See also p. 168, where he misquotes Ramsay in the line, "Sae noyted he their pows," and charges him with *changing* this verse, when in the line preceding he admits it had appeared, in part at least, in the previous edition of Gibson.

Gibson had it,

"Sae *cowit* he thair pows;"

Bannatyne has it,

"Sae noyet he their *nowis;*"

Chalmers,

"So nowit he their nowis."

Ramsay, out of the two lines of Gibson and Bannatyne—neither of which, as Chalmers confesses, is sense—makes up one full of it—

"Sae noytit he their pows;"

not 'nayted,' as quoted by Chalmers. Noytit is the same word as noyet—being the compound pret. of *noy*, to hurt, to annoy, as more familiarly known in Scotland. In this reading, with a slight difference in the spelling, he is followed both by Tytler and Sibbald. A careful comparison of the edition in the 'Evergreen' with that of Chalmers, will show how little this curious piece of antiquity has gained in its *text* by the labours of the antiquaries in the hundred years that have elapsed between these editions, and with how little reason Chal-

mers was entitled to say, in reference to Ramsay's version of it, as he there does: "As Ramsay was a better poet than a critic, he altered what he did not understand, and he changed what he did not like."(1)

As a publisher of ancient Scotch poetry, however, the severest ordeal through which Ramsay's reputation has had to pass, has been the weight of the strictures upon his 'Evergreen,' delivered by the celebrated Lord Hailes in his 'Ancient Scottish Poems,' from the MS. of George Bannatyne, published in 1768. They are summed up in his preface in the well known words, "Ramsay omitted some stanzas and added others; has modernized the versification, and varied the ancient manner of spelling."

With respect to the first of these charges, viz. of having "omitted some stanzas," if there be ground for censure, Lord Hailes as well as our poet must be censured alike, for both are guilty, and ofttimes for the same reason, viz. that the verses omitted were so indecent that neither the one nor the other dared publish them to the world. In this respect the too "severe taste," as Sir Walter Scott calls it, of Lord Hailes, carried him further than our poet, who was not so fastidious, and who sometimes only altered what his Lordship omitted. See Lord Hailes' notes, p. 264, on a stanza omitted in the poem on 'Deming;' p. 261, on 'Ane his awin Ennemy;' p. 242, 'The Swearers and the Devil,' st. 13, l. 2. Nor can his Lordship any more than Ramsay escape the charge of having added others, since he not only added and altered occasionally himself, but adopted and published the additions of Ramsay. See note p. 290, to 'Lerges, lerges, lerges hay,' where his lordship admittedly alters the MS. st. 4, l. 1; p. 226, to 'The Thistle and the Rose,' st. 27, where his lordship says, "The conclusion of this

(1) Poetic Remains of the Scottish Kings, p. 130.

stanza is taken from Allan Ramsay, who caught the spirit of Dunbar, which Dunbar himself seems to have let escape by his bold and prosaic conclusion;" and p. 316, to 'The Wife of Auchtermuchty,' where he adopts an alteration by Ramsay of six and an addition of twenty lines, admitting that they are "quite in the style of the original." (1) George Chalmers gravely makes it a charge against Ramsay, that he had added, as a Postscript, three stanzas to Dunbar's 'Lament for the Makars,' containing a prophecy respecting himself as 'a lad frae heather muirs;' but an inspection of the work itself will convince any of its frivolousness, inasmuch as from its position on the page, as well as from its language, any person may see it was never intended by Ramsay to pass as Dunbar's composition, but certainly as his own.

The charge of having modernized the versification, and varied the ancient manner of spelling, is true in part only, and can be easily explained if not justified. In considering this accusation, we must take into account Ramsay's position, the state of society at the time, and his own explanations in connection therewith. It is no doubt, as Sir Walter Scott says, "highly desirable that the text of ancient poetry should be given untouched and uncorrupted." But this is a point which, at least in this *rigid* sense, did not occur to Ramsay in 1724, any more than it did to Bishop Percy in 1765. The object of both was to win the favour of the public at periods when the great difficulty was not so much how to decipher the *very* words of an old black letter MS., as how to arrest the attention of the public upon the subject at all. Sir Walter says of Bishop Percy's work, which was faulty in a vastly higher degree in this respect than the 'Evergreen,' that that great and impor-

(1) This is incorrect. His lordship's reference led us to suppose he had adopted them in his version, which is not the fact.

tant service to literature—viz. the arresting of the public attention upon the subject—would never have been attained without his 'Ancient Reliques of English Poetry;' and surely even this remark is equally applicable to the greatly earlier publication of Ramsay, which may be said like the Bishop's to have first fixed the consideration of readers on the ancient poetry of Scotland, and made it worth while to consider how far its graces were really antique, or how far derived from the taste with which the publication had been superintended and revised. Ramsay did not edit these forgotten compositions with a view to gratify the curiosity of the mere antiquarian, —for no such class was then known,—but to please the public; he did not unlock these hieroglyphics to illustrate ancient forms of letters or modes of spelling, but to interest the Gentlemen Archers of Scotland in the specimens which they contained of the wit, the satire, and the poetry of their predecessors.

"I have observed," says he, in his prefatory address to them—a piece of composition which has obtained the praise of Sir Walter Scott, as being both spirited and elegant, and on that account has been quoted by him in his memorials of Bannatyne as follows:—"I have observed that readers of the best and most exquisite discernment frequently complain of our modern writings, as filled with affected delicacies and studied refinements, which they would gladly exchange for that natural strength of thought and simplicity of stile our forefathers practised; to such, I hope, the following Collection of Poems will not be displeasing.

"When these good old Bards wrote, we had not yet made use of imported trimming upon our cloaths, nor of foreign embroidery in our writings. Their Poetry is the product of their own Country, not pilfered and spoiled in the transportation from abroad; their images are

native, and their landskips domestick; copied from those fields and meadows we every day behold. The morning rises (in the Poet's description) as she does in the Scottish horizon. We are not carried to Greece or Italy for a shade, a stream, or a breeze. The groves rise in our own valleys; the rivers flow from our own fountains, and the winds blow upon our own hills. I find not fault with those things, as they are in Greece or Italy: but with a Northern Poet for fetching his materials from these places, in a poem, of which his own country is the scene; as our Hymners to the Spring and Makers of Pastorals frequently do.

"This Miscellany will likewise recommend itself, by the diversity of subjects and humour it contains. The grave description and the wanton story, the moral saying and the mirthful jest, will illustrate and alternately relieve each other.

"The Reader, whose temper is spleen'd with the vices and follies now in fashion, may gratifie his humour with the satyres he will find upon the follies and vices that were uppermost two or three hundred years ago. The Man, whose inclinations are turned to mirth, will be pleased to know how the good Fellow of a former age told his jovial tale; and the Lover may divert himself with the old-fashioned Sonnet of an amorous Poet in Q. Margaret and Q. Mary's days. In a word, the following Collection will be such another prospect to the eye of the mind, as to the outward eye is the various meadow, where flowers of different hue and smell are mingled together in a beautiful irregularity."

"There is nothing," adds Ramsay, "can be heard more silly than one's expressing his ignorance of his native language; yet such there are, who can vaunt of acquiring a tolerable perfection in the French or Italian tongues, if they have been a fortnight in Paris or a

month in Rome: but show them the most elegant thoughts in a Scots dress, they as disdainfully as stupidly condemn it as barbarous. But the true reason is obvious: every one that is born ever so little superior to the vulgar, would fain distinguish themselves from them by some manner or other, and such, it would appear, cannot arrive at a better method. But this affected class of fops give no uneasiness, not being numerous; for the most part of our gentlemen, who are generally masters of the most useful and politest languages, can take pleasure (for a change) to speak and read their own."

"Because we strictly observe the old orthography," observes Ramsay in a note to his first page of the 'Evergreen,' "for the more conveniency of the readers, we shall note some general rules at the bottom of the page, as they occur, wherein the old spelling differs from the present, in words that have nothing else of the antique, or difference from the English." And in reference to the variations in spelling of ancient MSS., which have perplexed all transcribers, — as the same word is expressed in two, three, or four modes, not only in the writings of the same epoch, but even in the same piece, —Ramsay says, "p. 2, *Shune*, *mune*, *sune*, sometimes *sone*, *mone;* but in these, as in many others, we have endeavoured to fix the orthography *to the most frequent manner*." It is well remarked by George Chalmers, in reference to an extant specimen copied by him of the writing of King James I.—who in the space of a few lines has confirma*tiun* and confirma*tione*—that "on the whole we may infer that they had not in those times any thing like orthography." "As it is thus impossible," he adds, "to establish any thing like uniformity in the spelling" (of the King's Quair,) "it has been thought fit to adopt altogether the *present* practice of orthography, as Mr. G.

Ellis has already done, in publishing a large specimen of this curious poem."(1) Yet this is the same writer who, in his biography of our poet,(2) says, that "when he published his Evergreen, Ramsay had not sufficiently adverted that, if he changed the orthography and modernized the verse, the state of the language and the nature of the poetry could no longer be discovered."

In the ancient poets many words were occasionally extended a syllable, in order to fill up the number in the line, and the orthography of those epochs admitted the use of plurals and genitives, sometimes as a syllable more than, and sometimes as only the same number of syllables with the original word. Ruddiman had taken notice of this circumstance in his Glossary to Douglas' Virgil, and Ramsay, in a note to 'Robin and Makyne,' 'Evergreen,' p. 58, adverts to it, and to the principle which,—rightly or wrongly,—he acted upon, of considering that in every such case the additional syllable was *not* sounded. "It is to be noticed," says he, "that our elders never apostrophized, yet by this case (*Wedderis*, pronounced *wedder's*, in the line

The wedderis fair, and I am fain,)

one may judge, that in every like case they pronounced as if such vowels were cut off with an apostrophe. Without allowing this, many of their lines will not be numbers." This, then, is the extent to which the charge against Ramsay of having modernized the versification, and varied the ancient manner of spelling, is correct. He adopted, of various modes of antique spelling, that which was in most frequent use in his authors' compo-

(1) Preface to 'The Poetic Remains of some of the Scottish Kings,' by George Chalmers. London, 1824.
(2) Vol. I. p. 22.

sitions, and which, as his extracts were from writings extending over a considerable space of time, happened to be a somewhat modern variety of it; and by cutting off. in every instance, the sound of the extra syllable, in the plurals and genitives of nouns, and inserting appropriate vocables to complete the lines, he avoided that harshness and inequality which would otherwise have perplexed and deterred ordinary readers. Of many instances that might be quoted, the following extract from "Ane little interlude of the Droichis part of the Play," will show how much more likely it is that the *rule* was to pronounce these syllables short than long:—

"Scho spatt Loch-loumond with her *lippis;*
Thunder and fyre-flawght flew fra her *hippis;*
Quhen scho wes crabbit, the sone thold *clippis;*
Thé feynd durst nocht offend hir."[1]

Here we see that a noun in the singular ending in *s*, makes rhyme with two nouns in the plural pronounced short. He did, in short, what Tytler in his 'Lives of Scottish Worthies' (London, 1836,) followed him in doing, with the view of making his specimens of the olden poets intelligible to his readers,—as Robert de Brunne expresses it:

"For the luf of symple men,
That strange Inglis cannot ken"—

and the following couplet will show with what success Ramsay anticipated his successor. It is taken from 'The Thistle and the Rose' of Dunbar, and is a part of the verse quoted by Chalmers in proof of our poet's infidelity in this respect, vol. i. p. 23.

(1) Scottish Ancient Poems. Edin., 1770, p. 174.

Bannatyne—whether correctly or not we know not—had copied it,

> "Quhen Marché wes with variand windís past,
> And Apryll haddé, with her silver showris;"(1)

thus requiring "March," "winds," and "had" to be pronounced as dissyllables—as here marked, although not so in the original—in order to make up the number of syllables in the line, a mode of reading poetry which few of Ramsay's age could even guess at. Tytler says, "With scarce the difference of a word it may be read as English poetry," thus:

> "When March with varying winds had onward past,
> And gentle April, with her silver showers."

Ramsay makes *ancient* verse of it thus, and, we think, more happily than either:

> "Quhen Merch with variand winds was overpast,
> And sweit Apryle had with his silver showers."

The direction given by Lord Hailes for reading these lines, viz. making 'variand' a trisyllable, va-ri-and, and also 'Apryll,' Ap-er-il, has this objection to it, that to make it probable, the spelling requires to be altered, as done by him and by Mr. David Laing. It is singular, however, that of the many of his commentators and biographers who have found fault with Ramsay for these variations,—if variations they be, for it is too much to assume that the reading of the Bannatyne MSS. is, in every inequality and absurdity, the true version of what

(1) We quote from Tytler, as in 'Lives of Scottish Worthies,' vol. III. p. 100.

the authors had written — *not one* has alluded to the clear intimations given above, of the principles upon which he acted, and the motives by which he was guided in these adaptations.

So far from having, as his biographers represent, failed as an attempt, it appears to have succeeded in a remarkable degree in bringing into general notice the ancient Scots poetry. Smollett, in his amusing and instructive novel of 'Humphrey Clinker,'—a work which excited vastly more attention on its appearance than any novel of the present day,—represents Melton, the young Oxonian, addressing his correspondent of Jesus' college in reference to it, as along with Ramsay's own works, strikingly characteristic of the peculiar talent of the country for poetry and humour. Although unaccompanied with those rich illustrative annotations which have adorned other collections, it has passed through various editions, one from the Glasgow University press being so recent as 1824, just a century after its first appearance.

To the ability and taste with which Ramsay executed these corrections, we have the evidence of the refined and elegant Bishop Percy, who, in his 'Reliques of Ancient English Poetry,' says, in reference to the version of 'Robin and Makyne,' which he inserted in that collection, "The palm of pastoral poesy is here contested by a cotemporary writer with the author of the foregoing. The critics will judge of their respective merits; but must make some allowance for the preceding ballad, which is given simply, as it stands in the old editions: whereas this, which follows, has been revised and amended throughout by Allan Ramsay, from whose 'Evergreen,' vol. i., it is here chiefly printed. The *curious* reader may however compare it with the more original copy, printed among 'Ancient Scottish Poems, from the MS. of George

Bannatyne, 1568. Edinb. 1770, 12mo.' "(1) He thus prefers the version of Ramsay to that of his friend and correspondent Lord Hailes, as being more intelligible, and as actually doing greater justice to the author. And after nearly three quarters of a century of abuse, on account of this publication, it is pleasant to see so competent a judge as Motherwell do him justice in the following terms: "This publication (the 'Evergreen') is highly creditable to the patriotism, industry, and good taste of its editor, the far-famed song writer, Allan Ramsay. It is questionable, indeed, if greater editorial fidelity than what he vouchsafed to give, would, in such matters, have then been duly appreciated."(2)

Honest Allan had himself no misgivings on the matter, and accordingly, in some lines intended by him to be prefixed to that collection,—which have never yet appeared in any edition of his works, but which will be found copied at the end of this volume,—he thus expresses himself in regard to his labours:

> "Thair Warks I've publisht, *neat*, *correct*, and *fair*,
> Frae antique manuscriptis, with *utmost cair*.
> Thus to their fame, a monument we raise,
> Quhilk sall endure quhyle Tymis telld out be days."

But such, unfortunately for his character and reputation, has not, it appears, been the opinion of those who have followed him in the republication of selections from the Bannatyne MS. Following him at the distance of nearly half-a-century, when more accurate notions of the duty of an editor had begun to prevail,—profiting by the previous labours of Ramsay in successfully evolving

(1) Third edition, 1775, vol. II. p. 73.
(2) 'Introduction to Scottish Minstrelsy, Ancient and Modern.' Glasgow, 1827.

the sense of not a few difficult passages in a MS. not seldom unintelligible when construed literally;(1)—and concentrating his attention on those rarer cases where, in consequence of its blunders, our poet had not penetrated the true meaning of the authors, and, on the natural principle of making them not appear to utter absurdities had, "happily enough" as his lordship somewhere admits and in perfect harmony with the context and spirit of his subject, substituted a word or phrase of his own;—Lord Hailes was enabled by the advantage of his greatly wider range of information and familiarity with a variety of ancient writings, and by means of a greater or less, yet still warrantable, emendation of the corrupted text,(2) to arrive at meanings which although somewhat conjectural, yet presented so much of probability as to justify their adoption. In detailing, however, in his otherwise valuable illustrative notes, these discoveries to his readers, his lordship, not seldom mercilessly, commented upon every failure of his predecessor in a cold, dogmatic, and supercilious tone, as if his want of success had been the result of carelessness or presumption rather than of infelicity. He did more. In the case of the line already referred to,

(1) For the frequent unintelligibility of the ancient Scottish poets, see Chalmers' edition of Sir David Lindsay's Works, vol. I. p. 133. "They present," says Pinkerton, speaking of them, "difficulties sufficient to puzzle the most skilful etymologist." "There are whole lines," says Mr. Sibbald, "which I am unable to explain."

(2) See note to line 57 of 'The Thistle and the Rose.' By changing the words "sonene of cherarchy" to "sone of cherarchy," or as Mr. D. Laing (in Dunbar's poems) has it, "soune of cherarchy,"—*query, song of cherarchy?*—his lordship has, without straining much the license of grammatical construction, brought out a beautiful sense. Next to having succeeded in this, however, Ramsay is entitled to the second place in commendation for his happy substitution; to understand which, however, the whole of this exquisite passage, in that and the preceding stanza, as they appear in the 'Evergreen,' and in Mr. D. Laing's invaluable edition, must be compared together. Yet he has been held up on all sides to ridicule for this labour.

"When Merch with varying winds was *over*past,"

his lordship, on account of the "trivial alteration," as Mr. David Laing calls it,(1) of transposing one word to another place in the line, and making the numbers complete by inserting a not inappropriate expletive, he says, "This may be a better line than what Dunbar could make; but it is the business of a publisher to set forth other men's works, not his own;"—an uncandid remark, inasmuch as he visits a liberty which every publisher of these poems, his lordship included, has been compelled to use, with a severity of censure wholly uncalled for in the circumstances—as if the line had ceased to be Dunbar's because it was completed and polished by Ramsay. And as every remark of Lord Hailes has, on account of his invaluable annotations, been almost *servilely* copied by successive publishers of editions of part or whole of these selections, the memory of our poet has thus been, through his lordship's instrumentality, kept unjustly as it were *pilloried* before the world, as that of an ignorant, if not a presumptuous blunderer.

It is doubtful whether the severity of his lordship's strictures had, or had not, their origin in his most mistaken but most unfavourable estimate of Ramsay as a glossarist. For many of the blunders into which he fell in his corrections of our poet's definitions we have already endeavoured to account,(2) by attributing it to his education abroad, and consequent ignorance of the colloquial Scotch, especially that portion of it which had since Ramsay's time nearly passed into desuetude. In coolly and dogmatically attempting, however, to set Ramsay right in such words as *aver*, *attercap*, *bannock*,

(1) Dunbar's Poems, vol. II. p. 220.
(2) See ante, p. 316.

bent, blether, bok,(1) &c., which were then in daily use, he only exposed himself to ridicule.

The following is the comparative estimate of Ramsay and his lordship, in this respect, made by one, certainly not disposed to undervalue the latter, or to lean with favour to the former.

"As Ruddiman," says George Chalmers in his introduction to the Glossary annexed to his edition of the Works of Sir David Lindsay,(2) "as Ruddiman was the first etymologist; so Ramsay may be allowed to have been the earliest glossarist. The editor of the 'Evergreen' has been outrageously blamed by those, who have not surpassed him, in the same art. Lord Hailes finds fault with him, for not consulting Ruddiman's Dictionary: but, the fact is, that Ruddiman printed the 'Evergreen;' that he was always at hand, when help was called for; that he has silently supplied more instruction to the unpresuming ignorance of Ramsay, than that modest scholar wished to be acknowledged: and, the publisher of the 'Evergreen,' by a sort of instinct, knew that, the office of an *etymologist*, and the business of a *glossarist*, are quite different. The glossary of Ramsay is very copious. and the wonder is that, in such a vast variety of words, he has committed so few mistakes. Oversights he has, not to say blunders; but fewer of either, than might be supposed, considering his copiousness.

"In 1770, Lord Hailes followed Ramsay, with a similar publication of 'Scotish Poems,' from the Bannatyne MS., with notes, and a 'Glossary.' Strange to tell! Considering his lordship's learning, there are nearly as many mistakes, in his glossary, as there are in Ramsay's,

(1) See Ramsay's glossary, Lord Hailes' strictures, and Jamieson's Scottish Dictionary, as to these vocables, except *attercap*; for which see *post*, p. 367.

(2) Vol. III. p. 190.

though it does not contain half the number of words. His lordship has embodied in it many words, that are merely the blunders of transcription: as, *swirk*, for *swink*, labour; *pais*, for *paiks*, chastisement; *luthe*, for *leuche*, or rather *leuch*, laughed, the old preterite of laugh; *doid*, for *deid; drawkit*, for *drowkit*, drenched. Lord Hailes, with his scholarship, cannot be considered as a better glossarist, than Ramsay, with his sagacity, though he must be allowed to be a much superior editor.

"The following are some of the most obvious mistakes, in Lord Hailes's Glossary:

Bumbard means a stupid fellow, one overgrown with fat, a substantive, not the adjective, *drunken.*
Cowth means, properly, known, familiar, and not *common.*
Dier, hurt, and as a verb, *to hurt*, or annoy, and not *dismay.*
Duddroun, a slut, a drab, he explains, *a spectre.*
Fellone, terrible, cruel, he explains, *strange, strangely.*
Huddroun, a substantive, for *a lubber*, he explains, as an adjective, *slovenly, disorderly.*
Jagit, notched, he explains, *pricked.*
Jangeallaris, the plural of *jangler*, a tell-tale, a mischief-maker, he explains, *sharpers, talkative, disputatious:* it is obviously a substantive.
Lykand, liking, is the old participle of *like*, in the Saxon form.
Maugre, spite, in spite of, he explains, *discountenance.*
Pens, to think, to meditate, he explains, to *reflect.*
Rak, care, he explains, *reckoning, account.*
Rawchter, a beam, he explains, *an instrument of torture.*
Sons, plenty, prosperity, he explains, *hospitality.*
Stang, a pole, he explains, *a beam carried on men's shoulders.*
Syle, to cover, to blind, he explains, *surround, encompass.*
Thraip, to allege, to accuse, he explains, *contend, strive.*
Wade, wode, mad, he explains, *revenged.*

But, of those errors, enow, to show, that even Lord Hailes could not always command his learning, and attention."

In his preface Lord Hailes finds fault with Ramsay's

glossary, as redundant in explaining various words which he calls common English ones. If the curious reader will refer to them (p. 7.), he will find they are all either differently spelled, or obsolete, or explained in a Scotch use differing from that of English writers, and that they were all so explained in the previous one of Ruddiman, which most untruly his lordship charges him with never having consulted. In commending the Glossary of Ruddiman at the expense of that of Ramsay, his lordship assumes that until then, 1770, the authorship of the former had not been declared to the world. In this opinion he is followed by Chalmers, who expressly states that his lordship was the first to do justice to Ruddiman as its author, and that the fact was only ascertained, by an entry in Ruddiman's own pocket-book, after his death in 1757.(1) It is due to Ramsay, however, to put on record, that, 46 years previous, in a note (p. 4.) to the 'Evergreen,' he refers to this invaluable etymological compilation as "*Mr. Ruddiman's* glossary to Gavin Douglas' Virgil," their common friendship, and it is probable, as we have already indicated, the assistance actually rendered by Ramsay in ascertaining some of its meanings, having long before made him aware of this fact.

The useful glossarial foot-notes of Allan to the 'Evergreen,' amongst which this circumstance is recorded, not having been repeated by him in his provisional glossary at the end of the second volume,—for he contemplated and distinctly announced a further and more complete one,(2)—appear to have been overlooked as well by Lord

(1) Life of Ruddiman, 1794, p. 47.

(2) "N.B. Some old Scots words are not explained in this glossary, through inadvertency in collecting and ranging of them, and some few, for which we can plead a better excuse, shall be annexed, with such in the third volume as are not explained in this, which volume is to be published in a short time, consisting chiefly of Satyres and Interludes, wrote by Sir David Lindsay of the Mount, Lyon King at Arms, and acted on the

Hailes as by all succeeding lexicographers until Jamieson. Had his lordship seen them, he either would not have mistaken the meanings there given of such words or phrases, as *Fudder, Dule in dern* in connection with *dill, Fair of feir*, &c., or in adopting his own renderings he would, as he usually did, have adduced these, in his eyes erroneous, explanations of Ramsay as further proofs of our poet's "want of skill in the ancient Scottish dialect." And had succeeding glossarists and etymologists been aware of their existence, they would surely have corrected or omitted the mistakes of his lordship.

The tone of contempt with which Lord Hailes, and others after him, have invariably spoken of our author as a glossarist, has provoked a living brother poet and editor to fasten upon one of the blunders into which his lordship has fallen in consequence of this overlook, and thereupon to rebuke them in the following terms:

"Sometimes," says the venerable John Struthers in a note to a passage in the beautiful pastoral of Henrysone, 'Robin and Makyne,' (1) republished by him in his collection of poems, "sometimes these learned persons are sadly bewildered by their 'much learning,' and put strange glosses upon passages, which, had they consulted their own ploughmen, or, in default of such retainers, their own kitchen wenches, instead of lexicons and vocabularies, they might easily have avoided. A very remarkable instance of this, we have in an illustration of the first stanza, of the preceding Poem.

"My dule in dern bot gif thow dill,
Doubtless bot dreid I de.

Play Green between Leith and Edinburgh, with several other Pieces never before printed."—Evergreen, vol. II. p. 286.

(1) British Minstrel, Glasgow, 1820, vol. II. p. 80. Struthers is the author of the 'Poor Man's Sabbath,' and various other poems, in Scotch and English.

"That is simply, if thou do not soothe, or mitigate, or assuage my secret grief, I shall certainly die. The learned commentators, however, confounding the word *dill*, which means simply to soothe or assuage, with *dail*, which means a quantity, have put upon the passage the very forced and unnatural meaning of *sharing* the concealed grief, which renders the Poet's meaning and his expression equally awkward and foolish. Her dule she wanted the silly shepherd not to share, but to do away by sharing her passion, which was the cause of her dule. I have somewhere seen Ramsay ridiculed by one of these learned editors, as a paltry fellow, who knew no language but that of the vulgar, the very language in which these works, which they seem to set so great a value upon, are written, and without the knowledge of which they cannot be understood. The truth is, that Ramsay's deficiency as an editor, and especially as a critic upon these remnants of the olden time, lay in his knowledge of vulgar language, and vulgar manners, being rather circumscribed than otherwise. I do not by this mean to be understood as speaking disrespectfully of his editorial labours, my opinion is, that they are more valuable than those of some who have been among the harshest of his detractors." Had honest John Struthers known that the true sense of the phrase in question, as well as that of several others, had long before been given correctly by Ramsay, he would have done him more justice, and perhaps them also.

More accurate research having now established their accuracy, most of the significations of the old Scots words given by Ramsay, and impugned by his lordship, are to be found in our national dictionaries. There are, however, two or three whose insertion in recent publications remaining as a stain on his memory, require on that account to be briefly noticed.

ATTERCAP—*a wasp*, (in the 'Flyting of Dunbar and Kennedy,' (1)) is referred to by Hailes as one of the "uncouth words misinterpreted" by our poet. "It is," says he, copying from Ruddiman's glossary to Virgil (in voc. *eater* or *ater*), "Anglo-Saxon for a *spider*." But his lordship as well as Ruddiman is in error. The word there referred to, *attercoppe*, *atercop*, or *attercob* (see Todd's edition of Johnson, voc. *cobweb*), does not signify a spider, but a spider's web; *ater*, *ather*, or *etter*, gore, filthy blood, or corrupted matter; *coppe*, *cop*, or *cob*, a calyx, cup, or receptacle. The error of Ruddiman as well as of various lexicographers, arises from identifying *cobweb* with *spider's web*, which from numerous quotations in Richardson (see the words *cobweb* and *spider*) appears not to be the case, it being frequently in old writers designated *spider's coppe* (cup) *web*, and in Dutch *spinne-cop*, or spun or thread cup. (2) There is no example in old or provincial English of *cob* designating a spider. The old Scotch for spider is *aragne* (G. Douglas); still used in Yorkshire as *arand* ('Shirley,' a modern novel).

Attercap, or *ettercap* (Scottish), from *atter*, venomous; and *caput*, the head; an ill-natured creature: evidently means a wasp, in the following uses of it:—

1st, As quoted in 'Evergreen,' vol. II. p. 74. Kennedy is

(1) 'Evergreen,' vol. II. p. 74.

(2) *Coppe*, *cop*, *cob*, or *cup*, has no reference to material, or shape, as the words *plate*, *glass*, *bowl*, *vessel*, *dish*, *chalice*, &c. It is probable its normal idea is, "that which keeps or holds." Ex. *seed-cob*, a seed-vessel; *net-cob*, or cobble, a small boat for nets; *cup-board*, "for plate of all sorts, Hackluyt;" in the variety *coop*, in its many uses, as *hen-coop*, for keeping poultry; *cooper*, a maker of vessels for keeping or holding; in *coping*, Italian *coperto*, the covering course of a wall for holding the masonry together, and keeping it from injury; *cope*, in monks, an outer dress to keep the inner from injury; and in *copse*, or *coppice* (Spanish *arbore coposo*, whence arbour or bower), which in the south of Europe means a small plantation so close and entwined at top as to *keep out* the sun's rays. There are words in *cob* (from old French *Gob*, a piece), with a different meaning, as *cob-coal*, piece or large coal; cobbler, a *piecer*, or *patcher* of shoes, &c. &c.

retorting upon Dunbar with equal fierceness for his repeated attacks upon him, and calls him

> "Cursed conspirator! cockatrice!— .
> . . . . . .
> Thou *yrefull attercap!*
> . . . . . .
> Deil dampint dog in vice insatiable!"—

evidently in reference to some active, irritable, mischievous animal, which certainly a spider is not.

2d, In Ramsay's 'Gentle Shepherd,' (1724,) vol. II. p. 115, Madge, incensed at Bauldy calling her "auld roudes," and threatening to bring her before the session as a witch, having seized him by the hair, says to Mause who seeks to separate them,

> "'Tis dafter like to thole
> An *ether-cap* like him to blaw the coal,
> It sets him weel with vile unscrapit tongue
> To cast up whether I be auld or young."

A *wasp* by stinging might irritate her, or 'blaw the coal of her anger, into fury; but certainly a *spider* could not. Besides, is it not likely that Ramsay understood his own language?

3d, In a 'Journal from London to Portsmouth,' (1754,) written in the Buchan dialect, by Robert Forbes, where it occurs in the following passage,

"The third" (companion in their journey) "was an auld, wisen'd, haave coloured carline, a sad gysart indeed, and as baul' as ony *ettercap;* we have been at nae great tinsel (loss) apiest (when) we had been quit o' her."

The boldness of the *ettercap* to which this old woman is compared, and which the context would make to consist in plaguing by her complaints, is characteristic of the wasp, and not of the spider.

This journal, along with the translation of the celebrated speech of Ajax, by the same writer, was printed by command of the elder Ruddiman, then in his 75th year, who cherished to the last an interest in the ancient dialects of the country, and who declared that the translation of the speech of Ajax was the best that had ever been made. The glossary was supplied by his nephew, Walter Ruddiman.(1) The word *attercap* is there explained, in a secondary sense, as a *wasp*. It is probable that Ruddiman himself revised the glossary of his nephew.

4th, In 'Waverley,' vol. II. p. 337, ed. 1841, where the Baron of Bradwardine speaking of Fergus M'Ivor as "the very Achilles of Horatius Flaccus," describes him as

> "Impiger, iracundus, inexorabilis, acer;"

which passage is rendered by Sir Walter Scott (vernacularly) thus—

> "A fiery *ettercap*, a fractious chield,
> As het as ginger, and as stieve as steel:"—

These lines are attributed by him to Robertson of Struan, but are actually (as many of these so-called quotations are) the composition of Sir Walter Scott himself.

Ettercap is here a personification of the different epithets; viz. an active (*impiger*), irritable or easily angered (*iracundis*), persevering (*inexorabilis*), sharp, or stinging (*acer*) animal; annoying at once and dangerous, as a wasp; or as a self-conceited, irritable, waspish, Highland chief, with a horde of caterans at his beck, would be to a neighbouring lowland proprietor.

(1) Chalmers' Life of Ruddiman, p. 259.

GARDEVYANCE, *a case of instruments*, (in the 'Fenyeit Frier of Tungland,') is also referred to by his lordship as one of the "uncouth words misinterpreted."

> "His yrins was rude as ony rawchter,
> Quhaire he let blude it was no lawchter,
> Full mony instrument for slawchter
> Was in his gardyviance."

"It is," says he, "from the French, garde de viandes, *a press for keeping victuals;* and hence *a cabinet*." And in a note (p. 231) he repeats the remark as to Gardevyance, and adds, "The glossary subjoined to the Evergreen ridiculously enough explains it to be, *a case of instruments*." In every successive publication of this poem, this remark and note of his lordship is to be found copied. The propriety of keeping the blood-letting instruments of an itinerating leech in a *cabinet*, as Lord Hailes would have it, is not obvious, any more than the convertibility of the latter word with a *meat press*. The word, however, is not from *garde de viande*, a place for keeping animal food, but from the old French *gar-de-vians*, or *viance*, the participle of the verb *viar*, Latin *viare*, to go by the way, to travel; (a word still to be met with in the Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese languages, as in *desviar*, *obviar*, *aviar* (to despatch one's business so as to enable him to proceed on a journey); in many tenses of the Portuguese verb *ir*, to go; as *viou*, I go; *viamos*, we go; *viar-se*, let him go, &c.; and *viandante*, a traveller,) and means, a protection or defence on a journey. This form of the verb is also to be met with in *pur-viance*, (as frequently in Sir David Lindsay,) to provide necessaries for a journey.

Garde-vyance occurs in Palsgrave as *gardeuyans*, and is explained by French *bahu*, a trunk. But although a trunk for carrying things may in a certain sense be a "guarde-

vians," or guard to the articles it carries against injury on a journey, any other package or arrangement in a package may constitute it a "garde-vians," although it be not a *bahu*, or trunk. In order the better to prevent commodities from receiving injury when carried from place to place, it was customary to secure them by having separate compartments in the package in which they were conveyed, as is still sometimes done in chests or portmanteaus, and it was this feature that appears to have constituted the article under-noted a "garde-vians," or "gardeviat:"

"Ane Franch gardewiat with three *fundis*,(1) full of my writings and ewidentis, Aberdeen Reg. a 1545."

And its resemblance, in having false bottoms or compartments, to such an article, seems to have been referred to in the following description:

"Memorandum, *fundin* (2) in a bandid kist like a *gardeviant;* in the fyrst, the grete cheyne of gold contenand seven score sex linkis."—*Coll. of Inventories*, p. 7.

According, therefore, to the nature of the articles to be protected, any *compartmented* package became a garde-vyance, whether for documents or jewellery, &c. In the case of this 'medecyne,' who is described as going about to visit and who fleeces his patients, the package in which he kept his lancets may, as being divided into compartments, with propriety be explained as *a case of instruments*. The writer of this has known a small box with trays or divisions used for transporting silver knives and forks, to be called, in the interior of Brazil where the old Portuguese prevails, a *guardeviat*.

(1) *Fundis*, Old Scotch, *funds*,—Spanish and Portuguese, *fundos*,—are bottoms or compartments.

(2) *Fundin*, sunk, placed in *funds*, false bottoms or separate compartments in a package.

CORENACH or CORONACH.—Ramsay has been sneered at by Lord Hailes, and corrected by Chalmers, for his explanation of this word as *a Highland tune*—the latter calling it an *Irish wail or lament;* the former, *a call or cry for aid.* But it is difficult to conceive how, with the brevity necessary to a glossary, a better definition than that of Ramsay could be given. It is sometimes a vocal intonation of wailing for the dead, as in the 'Battle of Harlaw,' or for a person in misfortune, as in the case of the old women who followed the litter of Lord Lovat *with wailing*, when passing the margin of Stratherick, his favourite country, as prisoner to Cumberland's soldiers;(1) sometimes an air on the bagpipe exciting to battle, as in the war coronach referred to in the 'Life of Lord Lovat,'(2) or of triumph after victory, as referred to by Lord Lindsay;(3) in both of which senses it is probably only a variety of the *Pibroch*, the march or battle tune of the Celtic tribes, and is so described by Lord Woodhouselee in his 'Dissertation on the Scottish Music. (4)

Such at least appears to be its meaning in the passage referred to by Lord Hailes, in his note in reference to this word, of which his lordship appears to have mistaken the sense:

(1) Mrs. Grant of Laggan's MSS., quoted in Life of Lord Lovat, p. 251.

(2) "It would be the delight of their fierce natures that one morning the war coronach was heard along Stratherick and Strathglass, and the *crossterie*, or fiery cross, passed on."—Burton's 'Life of Simon, Lord Lovat,' p. 26.

(3) Lives of the Lindsays, vol. II.

(4) "The Pibroch, the march or battle tune of the Highland clans, with the different strains introduced of the coronich, &c., is fitted for the bagpipe only: its measure in the *pas grave* of the Highland piper, equipped with his flag and military ensigns, when marching up to battle, is stately and animating, rising often to a degree of fury."—'Dissertation on Scottish Music,' in Transactions of Scottish Antiquarian Society, vol. I. p. 486.

"Na menstrallis playit to thame but dowt,
For glé-men thair wer haldin owt,
Be day, and eik by nycht;
Except a menstrall that slew a man,
Swa till his heretage he wan,
And enterit be breif of richt.

"Than cryd Mahoun for a Heleand Padyane:
Syne ran a Feynd to feche Makfadyane,
Far northwart in a nuke;
Be he the Correnoch had done schout,
Ersche men so gadderit him abowt,
In Hell grit roume they tuke:
Thae tarmegantis, with tag and tatter,
Full lowd in Ersche begowth to clatter,
And rowp lyk revin and ruke.
The Devill sa devit wes with thair yell,
That in the depest pot of hell
He smorit thame with smoke."

"The menstrall," Makfadyane, "that slew a man," and having entered by brief of right into the infernal regions, being called for by Mahoun to play a Highland pageant, or military music, 'schouts' the 'correnach,' so that "Erschemen gadderit him about," is a piper playing a Highland tune, or variety of the *pibroch* on the bagpipe, and not, as his lordship supposes,(1) a poor wight calling out for assistance; to do which, indeed, in such a place, would little avail him.

In his explanations of words with which he was acquainted—and he seldom attempted any others—Ramsay is generally perfect. Bishop Percy notices somewhere the precision and expressiveness of his definitions.(2) In

(1) Lord Hailes' note on the 'Dance of the Seven Deadly Sins' of Dunbar.

(2) In reference to his correction of Ruddiman's definition of *Elriche*, 'Minstrelsy,' vol. II. pp. 354, 5, and elsewhere in his glossaries. Bishop Percy, it may also be noted, appears to have been aware of Ramsay's

a recent publication we find the following testimony to the superiority of his definitions even over those of our national lexicographer. "The *hallan*," says the editor of the Poems of the Sempills of Belltrees—a recent publication—in his note to the well-known song of 'Maggie Lauder,' "the *hallan* is described in Jamieson's 'Scottish Dictionary' as the space, in old cottages, partitioned off by a wall from the fire-place, running backwards, to shelter the inner part of the house from the door; but Allan Ramsay gives a more correct idea of it. He says 'a hallen is a fence (built of stone or turf, or a moveable flake of heather) at the sides of the door in country places, to defend them from the wind. The trembling attendant about a forgetful great man's gate or levee, is also expressed in the term *hallenshaker*.'" (1)

The few mistakes into which Ramsay really did fall in his editing of the 'Evergreen,' have been commented upon by his critics in a spirit the reverse of candid or charitable. It is true that in the 'Flyting' he mistook and read Mount "Saltone" instead of Mount "Falcone;" but when it is remembered how much alike in ancient copies are the f's—names of places being there frequently begun with small letters, not capitals—and the long s's, —there is a still unsettled controversy between Pinkerton and Chalmers as to whether a certain word in the Maitland MS. of 'Christ's Kirk,' be *farar* or *sarar*, in consequence of this similarity, (2)—as well as how difficult it is to distinguish in them the tall c's from the t's —even Mr. David Laing is unable to determine whether a word in Dunbar's 'Thistle' should be read *proteir* or

glossarial foot-note renderings in the 'Evergreen,' and to have copied them, in some instances with hesitation, but never those of Lord Hailes.

(1) Poems of the Sempills of Belltrees, by James Paterson. Edin., (Stevenson,) 1849, p. 119.

(2) Chalmers' 'Poetic Remains of Scotish Kings,' p. 165, compared with Pinkerton's version in 'Ancient Scottish Poems.'

proceir(1), on account of this difficulty;—when it is considered that the mistake of Ramsay consisted only in the misreading of these *two* letters; that Lord Hailes, Bishop Percy, Pinkerton, and others who examined the MSS. after him, fell into the same error; that it was only discovered and corrected by the accident of an early printed copy of the original poem falling into the hands of Mr. Sibbald, who having thus gained the key was enabled to unlock the true reading; surely to characterize this failure on the part of our author to do that which accident alone enabled another to achieve, as "*an impudent substitution*," as has been done by Dr. Irvine in his Life of Dunbar(2), is neither generous nor honest; for every sensible person will be ready to admit, that were the Dr. himself placed in circumstances *exactly* similar to those of Ramsay, it is quite as likely that he would have committed as that he should have avoided the mistake in question.

It is also true, as stated by Sir Walter Scott, that into the MS. of the ballad of the 'Reidsquhair,' as copied in the hand-writing of the Hon. Mr. Carmichael in the Bannatyne collection, Ramsay interpolated in a few cases different readings from those of the original, which were inaccurate,—which readings also he published in his version in the 'Evergreen;' but it is not very clear that his doing so was "altogether unpardonable," as Sir Walter asserts it to be.(3) It must be kept in mind that Mr. Carmichael did not get access to this collection till 1714, at which time it was first gifted to him;—that the ballad in question must therefore have been inserted by him in that collection subsequently to this date; that Ramsay had access to the collection so early as 1715, when his

(1) Dunbar's Poems, by D. Laing, vol. II. p. 218.
(2) 'Lives of the Scotish Writers,' vol. I. p. 393.
(3) 'Minstrelsy,' vol. II. p. 15.

first edition of 'Christ's Kirk,' taken from it, was published; that the MS. collection continued to be the property of Mr. Carmichael until his death some years after the publication of the 'Evergreen' had been completed; that Ramsay was not the man to tamper with the property and work of another party intrusted to him, and that a man of rank, without that party's express consent; that our author was in frequent communication with parties connected with the Border and elsewhere, in relation to old ballads, having recovered from one of them the original ballad of 'Johnnie Armstrong;' and that from some of these he might have received these readings as more authentic than those of Mr. Carmichael's version; in short, that the circumstance of this being the *only* instance in which Ramsay has interfered with the written text of these MSS., and that it is in the case of an insertion of verses of very recent date, and in the hand-writing of one whom he was bound to respect and to consult, is *prima facie* favourable to the inference that these interpolations were made with the consent of the proprietor, and upon grounds that fully justified their adoption.

The last charge of weight against Ramsay which need here be noticed, is that of having allowed much of the old characteristic *song* poetry of Scotland to be annihilated, in order to introduce as substitutes for them about ninety new songs, of which sixty were composed by himself, and thirty by his friends. In this respect the treatment he has received has been frequently ungenerous if not harsh and cruel. Ritson, Pinkerton, various compilers and editors, most of his biographers, and last but not least Sir Walter Scott himself, have in their respective styles, and with more or less detail, literally *cudgelled* him for his alleged sins in this respect. The censure of Sir Walter was the severest, "unkindliest cut of all;"

and it grieves the admirers of the author of the 'Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border,' generous, liberal, and kind, as he almost always is in his treatment of his fellow-poets, to see him join the chorus of Ramsay's detractors,—in a work too that must have passed under the eyes of hundreds of thousands of his countrymen;—a procedure, for which this great writer's passionate fondness for the ancient lyrics of Scotland, and credulity as to their extent and antiquity, can alone furnish an explanation. We refer not here so much to the observations on this subject contained in his 'Introductory Remarks on Scottish Popular Poetry,' to which we will shortly afterwards refer, as to his note on the ballad of 'Johnie Armstrong,' faithfully copied by Ramsay from the mouth of a gentleman, the sixth in descent from the hero of the poem, and published by him in the 'Evergreen.' Instead of expressing gratitude to his predecessor for the careful labour which put beyond chance of loss this memorial of times and manners that can never return, Sir Walter coldly observes, "It is fortunate for the admirers of the old ballad, that it did not fall into Ramsay's hands when he was equipping with new words the old Scottish tunes in his Tea Table Miscellany."(1) Sir Walter could not know at what period it fell into Ramsay's hands, much less could he assert that at any period of his life, our poet would have mutilated what he was assured was the *genuine* old ballad.

But the extreme measure of censure has at last brought about a reaction in his favour, and more cautious and temperate as well as more competent judges have come to the rescue, in whose able hands we leave his defence.

"It has been for some time the practice," says Allan Cunningham in his celebrated work upon the Songs of

(1) 'Minstrelsy,' vol. I. p. 406.

Scotland, "to upbraid Allan with negligence in collating, and want of sympathy in editing ancient songs; his accusers forget that he was the first who made the attempt, and that without his aid we might have had nothing where we have much—and that he had not leisure to go in quest of the torn and bleeding members of old song: that he rescued many from certain oblivion, we have the evidence of in his works; but that he threw willingly away any of our beautiful antique lyrics for the sake of filling their place with his own, we have no assurance save surmise. He says, indeed, that feeling assured how acceptable new songs to known tunes would prove, he had made verses for more than sixty, and thirty more were done by ingenious young gentlemen. But Allan, with all his vanity—and he had a reasonable share—and with all his imperfect taste—and he was not without it—had far too keen a s nse of the beauties of song to cast any productions of merit away. Songs of genius protect themselves against duller rivals; they would have outlived—since they had lived so long—the negligence of any collector, and found safe sanctuary in some of those compilations with which the land was soon inundated. They who seek to believe that up to the time of Ramsay we had many oral lyrics of great antiquity and beauty, imagine also that he has supplanted them in popular esteem by his own inferior works—that he has buried the old gold to give currency to the baser metal of his own coining. I cannot see how the charge can be either substantiated or disproved, and he must be content to be assailed or defended by those who put harsh or charitable constructions on a passage which is open to both. How far he endeavoured to supply the place of what was lost, correct what was indelicate, or elevate what was silly, we may inquire in vain. But we may well imagine the song to be gross which Ramsay omitted on account of its indelicacy, and very

dull and very weak which he threw away when he was labouring to fill up the craving appetite of volumes. It cannot be denied, that he gave a willing place in his collection to many exquisite old songs—that he preserved and eked out with more or less happiness many fragments and many choruses;—and are we to suppose that he denied the like care to any other deserving lyric? Of the many fragments of oral song which it has been my fortune to find, a number of them bear the names and characters of those which have been numbered among the lost favourites of our forefathers—they are all alike licentious and indiscreet; and if I may judge of those suppressed by those that have survived, we ought rather to praise Ramsay's good sense than to censure his want of sympathy with the remains of our minstrelsy." (1)

"It is customary," says Robert Chambers, "to hear honest Allan railed against, for thus annihilating so much of the old characteristic poetry of Scotland. But it should be recollected, that, even if preserved, these things could only be interesting in an antiquarian, and not in a literary point of view; and also that the new songs thus projected upon the public were possessed of much merit. If the old verses had been better in a literary sense than the new, they would have survived in spite of them. But they were not better; they had no merit at all; and of course they perished. Those who declaim against Ramsay for this imaginary offence, forget that, amidst the poems he substituted for the old ones, are, 'The Lass o' Patie's Mill;' 'The last time I came ower the muir;' 'The Yellow-haired Laddie;' 'The Waukin' o' the Faulds;' and 'Lochaber no more,' by himself; 'My dearie, an thou die;' the modern 'Tweedside;' and 'The Bush abune Traquair,' by Crawford;

(1) Songs of Scotland, vol. 1. pp. 182—184.

'The Broom o' the Cowdenknowes,' by somebody signing himself S. R.; some of Mr. Hamilton of Bangour's beautiful lyrics; 'Were na my heart licht I wad die,' by Lady Grizel Baillie; and a great many more capital compositions, forming, it may be said, a large proportion of what is at present the staple of Scottish song."(1) Yet it is these very songs, and these accomplished individuals, that Pinkerton describes as "the poor tinsel of Allan Ramsay and his bottle-companions."(2)

Sir Walter's censure of our poet rests entirely upon the assumption that in writing "new words to known good tunes," Allan proceeded on the principle of throwing aside, *in all cases*, the ancient verses; but of this accusation there exists no proof, or rather, what evidence remains would appear to point the other way. In the case of the ballad of "Bessie Bell and Mary Gray," whose affecting tale Sir Walter laments should have fallen into the hands of Allan,(3) only two stanzas

(1) Scottish Songs, edited by R. Chambers, vol. I. pp. lv., lvi.

(2) Introduction to Select Scottish Ballads, 1783, vol. II. p. xxx. The inconsistency of this language becomes more apparent in its connection with the context. Pinkerton is referring to what he calls "the genuine Scottish pastoral ballads," of which he says "there are not half a dozen in print, such as 'The Yellow-haired Laddie,' 'Ewebuchts, Marion,' 'In summer I maw'd my meadow,' &c.," and adds, "What a sad exchange to give such songs for the poor tinsel of Allan Ramsay, and his bottle-companions!" But there was no exchange or giving in the case. Ramsay preserved the two songs first in order of those enumerated here by inserting them in his 'Tea Table Miscellany,' and Herd the third. If to the tune of 'The Yellow-haired Laddie,' Ramsay composed two other songs, one of them beginning "In April, when primroses paint the sweet plain," he gave his readers the choice of preferring the older words, which of course they have not done. The one of which we have given the first line has been adopted by all succeeding compilers except Pinkerton, the other was introduced by Ramsay as one of the songs of the Gentle Shepherd. From the markings of Ramsay, it is probable that he not only preserved but improved and added to 'The Ewebuchts, Marion,' which Pinkerton laments should be exchanged for Allan's poor tinsel. The fragment—for it consists of 8 lines only—of the third song, preserved by Herd, may have been in existence in Ramsay's time, but it is quite as likely that it was not.

(3) Introduction to Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border.

have yet been discovered, one of which is given entire by Ramsay, and there is no reason to suppose he ever saw the other; whilst the melancholy pathos of the original story is by no means indicated in that which fell into his hands. Those who believe him to have had no taste or talent for the plaintive and mournful strain, forget he was the writer of the four songs above referred to; and if our conjecture and that of Motherwell be correct, that he put together from fragments of several longer and more ancient compositions the exquisite ballad of "Oh waly, waly, up the Bank,"(1) he has the merit of compiling one of the pieces of the truest, most touching, and mournful pathos that is to be found in this or in any other language. How little likely then is it, that, if he had known the real story of these unfortunate and lovely women, much less learned the words, he would have cast his song in the form he did, viz. the rivalling effect of their charms in producing hesitation on the part of the lover as to which of the ladies to prefer. (2)

The numerous and valuable notes by Mr. Stenhouse and Mr. David Laing, appended to the re-issue of Johnson's 'Musical Museum,' (3) contain however, in detail as full and complete as need be desired, the evidence necessary to establish not only that, in every case where Ramsay, by himself, or his distinguished countrymen and women, substituted new songs for ascertained older compositions, it was only because they "could not be printed," as Mr. Robert Chambers observes, "on account of indecency and want of merit;" but that, in many instances, the songs he published as old, and which in reality were old songs, were, as Stenhouse expresses it,

(1) Introduction to Scottish Minstrelsy ancient and modern.

(2) Pennant seems to be the first writer who was aware of the real history of these young ladies, long subsequent to Ramsay's time.—*Stenhouse's note* in 'Musical Museum.'

(3) Edinburgh, 1839.

"polished a little" by him, "to render them less objectionable on the score of decency," so that, as Ramsay says in his preface, "the modest ear of the fair singers might meet with no affront." The following, from among many of the notes referred to, will, it is hoped, be deemed not only satisfactory but *sufficient* testimony on this head:—

"A COCK LAIRD, FU' CADGIE.

"This very humorous old song is generally, though erroneously, attributed to Ramsay by his biographers. Ramsay, indeed, did make some verbal alterations upon it; but William Thomson felt no scruple in presenting it, in its original rustic garb, to a queen of Great Britain, so late as the year 1725. As Ramsay has frequently been censured for suppressing the ancient songs, and substituting his own inferior productions in their stead, it seems but fair, in justice to his memory, to give the reader an opportunity, by inserting the old words here, of judging whether, or how far, such censure is really just.

A cock laird fu' cadgie,
W' Jenny did meet,
He haws'd her, and kiss'd her,
And ca'd her his sweet.
Gin thou'lt gae alang wi' me,
Jenny, quo' he,
Thou'se be my ain leman
Jo Jenny, Jenny.

Gin I gae alang wi' you,
Ye manna fail
To feed me wi' crowdie,
And good haekit kail.

What needs a' this vanity,
Jenny? quo' he;
Are na bannocks and dribbly beards
Good meat for thee?

Gin I gae alang wi' you,
I maun hae a silk hood,
A kirtle-sark, wylie-coat,
And a silk snood,
To tye up my hair in a
Cockernonie.
Hout awa! thow'st gane wud, I trow,
Jenny, quo' he.

Gin you'd hae me look bonnie,
And shine like the moon,
I maun hae katlets, and patlets,
And camrel-heel'd shoon,
And craig-claiths, and lug-babs,
And rings twa or three.
Hout, the deil's in your vanity,
Jenny, quo' he.

Sometimes I am troubled
Wi' gripes * * *
Gin I get nae stoories,
I may mysel' shame;
I'll rift at the rumple, and
Gar the wind flee.
Deil stap a cork in your * * * *
Jenny, quo' he.

Gin that be the care you tak,
Ye may gae loup,
For sican a hurcheon
Shall ne'er skelp my —,
Howt awa, gae be hang'd,
Lousie laddie, quo' she.
Deil scoup o' your company,
Jenny, quo' he.

"Though such broad-humoured verses were formerly

thought nothing of, they would not now be tolerated in a drawing-room; for times change, and we are changed with them." (1)

A comparison of this version with that published in vol. ii. pp. 294–6, will show not only that this song is indebted to Ramsay to a greater extent than Mr. S.'s note would indicate, but also how skilfully Ramsay retained all the humour, kept up the spirit, and sustained if not improved the character and descriptions of this piece, rejecting all its coarse and grossly indecent matter. Even in the two stanzas he has preserved, the few verbal alterations introduced by him are all for the better. The third is a vast improvement in truth of character to that for which it is substituted. The two last stanzas in the version of Ramsay are entirely new, the rest of the older song having been very properly rejected by him altogether.

The reaction in favour of Ramsay has not limited itself to defending him from blame as respects the editorship of the 'Tea Table Miscellany;' it has at last done something like justice to the merits of that invaluable compilation. The researches of the writers from whom we have quoted,—and still more those of Mr. David Laing and his "coadjutor in their labour of love," (2)—into the early history of Scottish song, conducted as they have been in a spirit of judgment and candour, enable us to estimate the beneficent influence which its publication exercised upon the habits of the society of that day, as well as the mighty impetus which it gave to the cultivation of a taste for, and the consequent improvement and refinement of, the ancient and beautiful, and in all probability original, song music as well as song poetry

(1) Illustrative Notes to Johnson's 'Musical Museum,' vol. II. p. 138.
(2) Mr. C. K. Sharpe, as mentioned in Mr. D. Laing's preface to Stenhouse's edition of the Musical Museum, p. xxi.

of the country. The epoch of its appearance has been referred to by one of the most competent of living judges as "that grand era in the history of Scottish song."(1) The periods at which its separate portions were published have been carefully sought to be ascertained; the names and the histories of the various contributors attempted to be traced; and their compositions to be verified. It may be regarded with justice as the first effort made to rescue the old melodies of the land from their association with obscene and worthless words, and from the exclusive possession of the profane and the vulgar, and, in winning for them thereby an instantaneous popularity with the noblest and the most refined of the land—for whom, as its name declares, it was chiefly designed,—as not only having completely succeeded in that, but, as having laid the sure foundations for those priceless and ofttimes spontaneous enrichments and additions to itself, to successive works of the kind, and to the number and beauty of the then existing melodies of the country, by means of which, the acceptability of Scottish song, not only in that kingdom, but in all places where the language of England is spoken, stands forth as something *unique* and highly satisfactory in the history of the British islands. A curious contemporary letter brings out the circumstance of their early popularity, with some features of novelty.

"Mr. Ramsay again," writes the well-known David Malloch or Mallet to Professor Ker,(2) after commenting in a spirit of cynicism on some of his fellow-

(1) Mr. R. Chambers' 'Historical Essay.'—Scottish Songs,' vol. I.

(2) Of Aberdeen, dated Dreghorn, Sept. 11, 1722—as published in Edinburgh Magazine, or Literary Miscellany, for 1789. See Johnson's 'Musical Museum,' vol. V. p. 345. It appears by above date, that 'The Tea-Table Miscellany' was published two years earlier than is generally stated. Chalmers, and all Ramsay's biographers, assign the publication of the first volume to 1724.

poets, "aspires no higher than humble sonnets at present. He has published several collections of Scottish songs, and wonderfully obliged the young creatures of both sexes; the men, by giving them the opportunity of letting the world see they are amongst the number of those *quos æquos amavit Apollo;* and the women, by making public those pretty love songs, where their sparkling eyes, rosy cheeks, and snowy breasts, are so tenderly described. His Miscellany songs are wrote by several hands. These are the *present* entertainments in town."

How far the opinion of this reluctant testimony to their merit and popularity, that by lending himself to sonnet writing our poet lowered his ambition, might be shared by others, Ramsay himself had no such feeling—he evidently entered into the work *con amore.* During nearly twelve years of a very busy life, he employed his comparatively limited leisure, as did Burns in his latter days, in searching out old tunes and words, and where the latter were unworthy of the alliance, in equipping the former with something in the original spirit. His inspiration, like that of his great follower Burns, was unquestionably their exquisite music. It is of that he speaks in his well-known preface, and of that alone. The number of old tunes he has preserved, by the insertion of their names in his Miscellany, is a proof of the keen interest he took in these national strains, and is a boon of the very highest value to those who are curious in the history of music. It is a curious fact also, that, in the two first volumes of the 'Tea Table Miscellany,' Allan, wherever it is in his power to do so, names the *tunes* to which his songs were to be sung, as if in reference to some work in which they were contained, and which was then accessible to the public. The same occurs throughout as to the songs in

the 'Gentle Shepherd.' In many cases no other name is attached to the songs in the 'Miscellany' than that of the tunes to which it is to be sung; the names they now bear in his collected works having been afterwards given to them by him.

There are few writers whose works contain so many allusions not only to music and song, but to particular tunes of songs, as do those of Ramsay. 'Patie Birnie;' his additions to 'Christ's Kirk,' and 'the Gentle Shepherd,' are instances of this. One of the finest touches of nature in the latter work, is connected with a popular tune. (1) A dispute as to the antiquity of the well-known air of 'Maggy Lauder' may be settled by a reference to its pages. (2) His 'Address to the Music club,' while manifesting his attachment to music in general, shows what especial interest he felt in that of his native land, as, in closing, he calls upon them to

> "Add to their country's fame,
> And show that music may have as good fate
> In Albion's glens as Umbria's green retreat;

(1) Roger, describing the disdain of Jenny, says—

> "Last night I played—ye never heard sic spite—
> *O'er Bogie* was the spring, and her delyte,—
> Yet tauntingly she at her cousin speer'd,
> Gif she could tell what tune I play'd, and sneer'd!"

(2) It is doubted by Mr. R. Chambers, in his work on Scottish Songs, whether this song be the composition of one of the Semples of Beltrees, and not a production since the days of Ramsay, since it is not included in his 'Miscellany.' Mr. Paterson, the editor of the poems of the Semples of Beltrees, however, asserts its antiquity, because the heroine, as he asserts, lived long before Ramsay's time. Both parties were unaware at the time of the following lines:—

> "Jenny sings saft the 'Broom of Cowdenknows,'
> And Rosie lilts the 'Milking of the Ewes;'
> There's nane like Nancy 'Jenny Nettles' sings;
> At turns in 'Maggy Lauder' Marion dings."—Vol. II. p. 83.

This is conclusive as to the tune, but as to the song the question is still an open one.

And with Correlli's soft Italian song
Mix 'Cowdenknows' and 'Winter nights are long:'
Nor should the martial 'Pibrough' be despised;
Own'd and refined by you, these shall the more be prized."

When Oswald, the celebrated musical performer and composer of national melodies, had left Scotland for London in 1741, Ramsay, who appears to have conceived a regard for him, addressed him, through one of the periodicals of the day, a poetical epistle, which shows how familiar he was with that talented artist's compositions, and how highly he appreciated them.

"Dear Oswald, could my verse as sweetly flow
As notes thou softly touchest with the bow,
While all the circling fair attentive hing
On ilk vibration of thy trembling string,
I'd sing how thou wouldst melt our souls away
By solemn notes, or cheer us with the gay,
In verse as lasting as thy tunes should be,
And soft as thy new polish'd 'Danton me.' "

Oswald, it appears, was in the practice of issuing his compositions to the world under fictitious names, as if previously known or old tunes, an innocent fraud which did not escape Ramsay's detective ear, for he says:—

"Oh Jamie! when may we expect again
To hear from thee the soft, the melting strain?
. . . . .
When wilt thou teach our soft Ædian fair
To languish at a false Sicilian air?
Or when some tender tune compose again,
And cheat the town wi' David Rizzio's name?"

As a compensation for his departure, he urges him to publish more of his pieces.

"Meanwhile, to keep our heavy hearts aboon,
Oh publish a' your works, and send them soon;
We'll a' subscribe as we did for the past,
And play while bows may wag and strings can last.
Farewell!—Perhaps, if you oblige us soon,
I'll sing again to a new fav'rite tune."(1)

But the most remarkable circumstance connected with the history of Allan Ramsay evidencive of his enthusiastic attachment to the national music of Scotland —if indeed one more decisive than his submitting to the painful and inglorious task of collecting, collating, and editing these embodiments of the mirth or sorrow of our ancestors which are contained in his Miscellany can be imagined—is to be found in the singular and, till now, unnoticed fact, that the *first* professed collection of Scottish *tunes*, not only in Edinburgh, but in Scotland and in Britain, was undertaken and published by him, at a time when he still followed his business of a peruke-maker, when he could have no direct business connection with such an operation, and had no antecedents to enable him to judge of its success, and that in all probability he was a loser by the speculation.

If the reader will refer to p. 276, he will find that about 1726 (as there stated) a work was printed for and sold by Allan Ramsay, called 'Music for Allan Ramsay's Collection of Scots Songs, set by Alexander Stewart, and engraved by R. Cooper,'—one vol. in 6 parts, dedicated to various ladies of rank. The date, however, is conjectural, none being stated in the vol. itself; and is assumed to be *subsequent* to the publication of the 'Tea Table Miscellany,' which erroneously—as it appears by the letter of Malloch quoted above—had been fixed as on 1st Jan.,

(1) Edinburgh Magazine, Oct. 1741. This piece has no author's name, "but," says David Laing, "it might well be ascribed to Allan Ramsay." See the whole epistle to Oswald, post.

1724, but in reality must have appeared in one form or other at least two years earlier. (1) Malloch's letter speaks of "several collections of Scottish songs" having been published by Ramsay at that time, Sept. 1722. Of these the 'Miscellany' was one—that is distinctly stated; if issued in the form of small books, there may have been several of them; and the music referred to may have appeared as a companion to them. The selection is exclusively of tunes to songs now to be found in the earlier portion of the first volume. It is probable therefore that this music was published before the first volume appeared; that is, before 1724. True it is that at p. 278, Thomson's 'Orpheus Caledonius,' published in 1725, is said to be "entitled to the distinction of being the first professed collection of Scottish tunes." At the time Mr. Laing wrote this, the letter of Malloch referred to had not been seen by him, and under the belief that Thomson had preceded Ramsay, he made this remark. He gives, however, a quotation from Burney which states the matter rightly. "In February 1722, there was a benefit concert for Mr. Thomson, the first editor of a collection of Scots tunes *in England.* To this collection (viz. the collection of 1725), for which there was a very large subscription, may be ascribed the subsequent favour of these melodies south of the Tweed. After this concert, at the desire of several persons of quality," was performed a "Scottish song." (2)—By the phrase "Scots tunes in England," it is evident Burney was aware of earlier publications of the kind *in Scotland.*

(1) The date of 1st January, 1824, is apparently so well established as that of the appearance of the first *volume* of the 'Tea Table Miscellany,' that it is probable the collections referred to by Malloch were not in the form of volumes, but were in small parts, of a pamphlet character, which appearing successively, and meeting with general approbation, were *first collected into a volume*, and issued in that form, with Ramsay's preface of same date,—on 1st January, 1824.

(2) Burney's 'History of Music,' vol. IV. p. 647.

The reason why Allan's publication was not continued beyond the first volume, was, in all probability, the superior success of Thomson's volume. That this was owing to his skill as a musician in arranging the sets, to the superior character of the engravings, and to the countenance given it by royalty—being dedicated to the Princess of Wales—Allan himself assures us; but the principal cause was, probably, that in Allan's work the *music* alone was given, whereas Thomson's contains both the music and the *words*. "From this and the following volume," says he in his preface to the 'Tea Table Miscellany,' "Mr. Thomson (who is allowed by all to be a good teacher and singer of Scots songs) culled his 'Orpheus Caledonius,' the music for both the voice and flute, and the words of the songs finely engraven in a folio book, for the use of persons of the highest quality in Britain, and dedicated to the late Queen. This by the way I thought proper to intimate, and do myself that justice the publisher neglected; since he ought to have acquainted his illustrious list of subscribers, that most of the songs were mine, the music abstracted." It may be mentioned that collections of songs were published in Aberdeen in 1662 and 1666—but these were exclusively English ones—and that Scotch tunes were included in some English publications—a little Anglified it is true,—as in Playford's 'Dancing Master,' 1657 and 1710, and in Tom D'Urfey's 'Pills to purge Melancholy,' 1716 to 1720, but Allan Ramsay has, we think, the credit of being the first who undertook to publish a collection of the music of Scottish Songs.

The reason why Ramsay did not combine the words and music in one work is obvious, viz. that in the 'Tea Table Miscellany' many instances occur of the same air being directed to be sung to two, three, and four songs. 'Cowdenknows,' for example, occurs four times; 'Waes

my heart that we should sunder,' as many; 'Polwarth on the green,' thrice; 'Yellow-haired laddie,' thrice; 'Through the wood laddie,' 'John Anderson my jo,' 'I'll never leave thee,' 'Mary Scott,' 'Auld Langsyne,' and a great many more, twice. This explains the meaning of Ramsay's phrase, "new words to old tunes;" *i. e.*, new or additional sets of words to old airs. In 'Yellow-haired laddie,' 'Ewebuchts, Marion,' and some others, he gives the old set of words as well as the new adaptations. Many of these airs were of dances, as 'O'er Bogie,' 'Lochaber no more;' or foreign, as 'Chami ma chattle, ne duce skar mi,' to which no Scotch words had probably ever been previously composed. Several airs to which these new songs were directed to be sung were English, as 'Black-eyed Susan,' twice; 'Booth's Minuet,' 'The fourteenth of October;' 'Green sleeves,' &c. &c. In short, of the whole ninety songs, more than a third are not *substitutes*, but duplicate, triplicate, or quadruplicate sets of words to the same airs; a fourth are new songs composed to reels or foreign or English airs; of the remaining portion one-half at least are old retouched and added to by Ramsay; and the *mourned and murdered innocents* which constitute the residue, whose number cannot exceed fifteen to eighteen at most, are probably substitutes for others of the character to which reference has already been made.

Another, and a not less potent inspiration in the song writing of the 'Tea Table Miscellany,' as well with Ramsay as his coadjutors, was the blaze of beauty which then illuminated and charmed the society of the metropolis of Scotland. Denied by the jealousy of the English House of Lords the privileges of the British peerage, notwithstanding their express creation to that order by the Crown, the first nobles, and the representatives of the most ancient peerages in the land, refused to take

their places as representative peers, or to frequent the British court, and the majority of the aristocracy of Scotland followed their example. Edinburgh then became the resort of their families, and, especially in the festive season, the scene of their socialities. They mingled freely with each other, and with the respectable portion of the citizens. They contended for the mastery in their civic games; they admitted them to their parties and assemblies. Never in her palmiest days was Edina so jocund, so united, or so harmonious. Party-strife seemed forgotten in social amenities. Unless the testimony of all voices be wrong, the concentration of female attractions of that period was the most remarkable feature even of this happy state of things. "Mais, O ciel!" exclaims Mr. Freeman, styled 'Professor of the French,' in a tract(1) published in 1727, "Mais, O ciel! quelle foule de jeunes Beautéz que le Tems n'a pas encore meuries ne vois je paraitre en les aimables personnes, de Mademoiselles, &c. &c. Voici une charmante et nombreuse troupe, dont l'amour va bientot combatre tous ceux, qui renoncent à sa souveraine." Such were the fair in whose praise sang Crawford and Mitchell and Binning and Bangour, and Struan and the other but unknown amateur poets of that day. Of these was the lovely Mary Lilias Scot, the flower of Yarrow, the heroine of Crawford's best song, the subject of young Ramsay's best painting.(2) She was the daughter of another Mary Scott,(3)—whose beauty is the theme of Ramsay's fine verses vol. II. p. 228, as well as of a pretty song by Crawford, also in the 'Miscellany,'(4) and a beauty of

(1) Entitled 'L'eloge de Ecosse, et des Dames Ecossoises.'
(2) See Notes to this Song in Musical Museum.
(3) Daughter of Mr. Scott of Dryhope, in Selkirkshire. She was the original Flower of Yarrow.
(4) Entitled the 'Rose in Yarrow.'

not inferior celebrity. The susceptibility of our poet, albeit well entered in his fourth decade, was not unmoved by such a galaxy of rank and beauty as then irradiated the society of his favourite city.(1) He sung them collectively and separately, in their simplicity(2) and in their power. Many of those whom he has celebrated cannot now be traced under their anonymous designations.

In regard to others, he has been less enigmatical. The house of Eglinton, in the persons of two of its younger ladies, are the subjects of his verse. Lady Mary Montgomery, daughter of the husband of the celebrated Susannah Kennedy, (to whom Ramsay dedicated his 'Gentle Shepherd,') by his second Countess,(3) was distinguished as well, says a recent writer, by her good sense as by her beauty. She is the subject of a happy offering of the muse of Hamilton of Bangour, beginning

> "Say, thou with endless beauty crown'd,
> Of all the youth that sigh around
> Thy worshippers, and anxious wait
> From thy bright eyes their future fate;
> Say, whom do most those eyes approve?
> Whom does Montgomery choose to love?"(4)

To her this amiable poet dedicated his 'Flower of Yar-

(1) The interest which Ramsay took in all that promoted the welfare and improvement of the Scottish capital, is to be seen throughout his entire works.

(2) It is to be feared the ladies of that age were not familiar with heavy dressmakers' bills. See vol. II. p. 276. 'Let meaner beauties use their art.' "If the compliments for beauty and accomplishments lavished upon them by Mr. Freebairn," says the Editor of the Poems of Hamilton of Bangour, "were but half merited, they must have formed one of the most brilliant assemblages of the fair sex in the world, notwithstanding the insinuated plainness of their dress, which might possibly be attributed less to Scotch taste than to Scotch poverty," p. 192.

(3) Lady Ann, daughter of George Earl of Aberdeen, Lord High Chancellor of Scotland.

(4) Poems of Hamilton of Bangour. Edin., 1850, p. 67.

row.' Her beauty is the theme of his verses on sitting for her picture, (p. 73,) as

> "Pleased he sat by and joyfully survey'd
> The daring pencil image every grace;"

and she is expressly named by the French professor, along with her elegant stepmother and younger sister, as "la belle famille d'Eglintoun."

It is of this lady that Ramsay sings in the lines (vol. II. p. 270.) beginning

> "Oh! Mary, thy graces and glances,
> Thy smiles so enchantingly gay,
> And thoughts so divinely harmonious,
> Clear wit and good humour display;" (1)

and it is in reference to an accident that befell her that he composed the Ode in vol. I. p. 238.

Surpassing her still in beauty, at least in the opinion of the complimentary Frenchman, was her half-sister Eliza, afterwards Lady Betty Cunningham — the last Lady Betty in Scotland — who survived to the age of 93. She is mentioned by Hamilton of Bangour—vol. II. p. 41.—in his elegant dedication to her mother, and in various of his pieces.

> "Eliza young, in beauty bright,
> Though new to every soft delight,
> Yet soon her conquests shall extend,
> Soon shall the mighty maid ascend,
> The rival of each kindred name,
> And triumph to her mother's fame." (2)

(1) Inscribed in the 'Tea Table Miscellany' to L. M. M., to the tune of 'Rantin', roaring Willie.' Lady Mary was afterwards married to Sir David Cunninghame of Milncraig, Bart.,—a property in Ayrshire.

(2) Poems of Hamilton of Bangour, 1850, p. 71.

Nor is she unsung by Ramsay. The lines to Mrs. E(liza) C(unningham), as she afterwards became—vol. II. p. 237—(to the tune of 'Sae merry as we twa ha'e been,') are evidently intended for her:—

"Thine een the clear fountains excel,
Thy locks they outrival the grove,
When zephyrs these pleasingly swell,
Ilk wave makes a captive to love.
The roses and lilies combined,
And flowers of most delicate hue,
By thy cheek and dear breasts are outshined,
Their tinctures are naething sae true."

Lady Jean Douglas, the unfortunate sister of Archibald, Duke of Douglas, married to Sir John Stewart of Grandtully;(1) — who with the two ladies Cochrane, Freebairn describes as "goddesses, the pink of beauties, usually to be met together," celebrated also by Hamilton as one

"in whom combine
A noble spirit and a noble line;
Engaging looks, that mild inspire
Fond delight and young desire;"

seems with her accepted lover to be indicated in the 'Scots Cantata,' vol. II. p. 262.

The beautiful daughters of the Earl of Dundonald, the ladies Cochrane above referred to, seem however to have been the subjects of Ramsay's sweetest and most frequent song. The Lady Ann Cochrane, eldest of "these graces three," married James, fifth Duke of Hamilton, so often

(1) She was the lady who gives name to the "Douglas cause." Lady Jane was not married till 1746, twenty years after the 'Cantata' was published. But it is probable that the attachment was of long standing. Captain, afterward Colonel, and latterly Sir John Stewart, was not in affluent circumstances. They received an annual allowance from her brother the Duke during her life.

mentioned in Ramsay's poetry, on February 14, 1723, and died on the 14th August, 1724, leaving him one son, James, sixth Duke of Hamilton. Before she had completed her eighteenth year she was cut off. Although never seen by Hamilton of Bangour,(1) he alludes to her lamented fate in a touching couplet:—

"The eldest fell to death a prey,
Ah! snatch'd in early flower away:"—

and the tradition of her beauty, as well as two portraits, not happy ones, of her, remain still in the palace of her marriage.

To this noble lady, when still unconscious of love, and scarcely in her sixteenth summer, Ramsay addressed the lines to Mrs. A. C.,—vol. II. p. 285,—to the tune of 'All in the downs,' and more graceful or more appropriate ones perhaps never flowed from his pen:—

"When beauty blazes heavenly bright,
The muse can no more cease to sing
Than can the lark with rising light
Her notes neglect with drooping wing.
The morning shines, harmonious birds mount high,
The dawning beauty smiles, and poets fly."

The verses entitled 'Love inviting Reason,' vol. II. p. 251, directed to be sung to the tune of '*Chami ma chattle ne duce skar me*,' bear strong internal probability of having been composed in reference to the suit of James, her princely lover:—

"Rouse up thy reason, my beautiful Annie,
Let ne'er a whim ding thy fancy ajee,
Oh! as thou art bonny, be faithful and canny,
And favour thy Jamie, wha doats upon thee."

(1) In his epitaph on himself he says—
"Saw Cochrane never, and not wish'd it once."

Those entitled 'The Cordial,' or (vol. II. p. 267,)

"Where would bonny Annie lie,"

are by strong tradition (1) said to have been written in the prospect of the eventful marriage. 'The Masque'—originally entitled 'The Nuptials; a Masque;' as published in the quarto edition of 1728—vol. II. p. 185—esteemed by its London editor as the most admired of all his writings—is the proper 'Epithalamium' of their nuptials; and the 'Ode,' vol. II. p. 265, is his tearful and sincere tribute of sorrow for her untimely fate.

The song, vol. II. p. 269, entitled 'Allan Water,'

"What numbers shall my muse repeat,
What verse be found to praise my Annie?"

is also intended to celebrate this loveliest of Scotland's daughters, and seems to refer to the success of the suit of the Duke, but by mistake had been inserted into the edition from which the present was set up. It is evidently by Crawford of Drumsay,—having his distinctive mark, the letter C., in all the editions of the 'Miscellany,'—and not by Ramsay.

To the two noble ladies above referred to, viz. Anne Cochrane and Jane Douglas, along with a third, the Lady Charlotte Hamilton, daughter of James, third Duke of

(1) Johnson's 'Musical Museum.' Vol. IV. p. 363. They are in substitution, says Stenhouse, of a foolish old song, 'Where shall our gudeman lie?' to the tune of which it is directed to be sung. One stanza of the silly song runs thus:—

"Where shall our gudeman lie,
O where shall our gudeman lie,
Where shall our gudeman lie,
Till he shute o'er the simmer?
Up amang the hen-bawks,
Up amang the hen-bawks,
Up amang the hen-bawks,
Amang the rotten timmer."

Hamilton—afterwards sister-in-law to the first of these—married later to Charles Edwin of Dunearn in Glamorganshire—apostrophized also by Hamilton of Bangour (Poems, p. 69) as

> "Heavenly Charlotte, form divine,
> Love's universal kingdom's thine.
> Anointed Queen; all unconfined,
> Thine is the homage of mankind;
> Thy subjects, willing to obey,
> Bless thy mild rule, and gentle sway;
> With royal mood each zealous pays
> His tribute duteous to thy praise.
> Yet nought to greatness dost thou owe;
> Thy merit from thyself does flow;
> Alike our wonder and our theme,
> In beauty or in place supreme;"

one of "the goddesses" of Fairbairn—the subject—if internal probability may warrant us in conjecturing—of the lyric 'To Calista,' vol. II. p. 232, as also of the Epigram to the lady of the same name, vol. III. p. 6; —to these three ladies it was that Ramsay appears to have dedicated his 'Tea Table Miscellany,' vol. II. p. 202,

> ("To
> Ilka lovely British lass,
> Frae Ladies Charlotte, Anne, and Jean,
> Down to ilk bonny singing Bess
> Wha dances barefoot on the green,")—(1)

(1) These three ladies were then the first in Scotland in popularity for beauty as well as rank, as appears from their being named at the *head* of the Toasts of the Royal Archers, vol. I. p. 222.

> "My Lord, your toast, the Preses cries.
> To Lady Charlotte, he replies.
> Now, Sir, let's hear your beauty bright.
> To Lady Jean, returns the knight.
> To Hamilton a health gaes round,
> And one to Eglinton is crown'd."

This piece is marked in this edition 1728, which is the date of its publication; but it was written in 1722, or 1723 at latest.

a circumstance which goes to support the opinion that Ramsay had published that collection before 1724; since the Lady Anne, having become Duchess of Hamilton on 14th February, 1723, would not at that date have been so designated, which however she might, with perfect propriety, have been, if we suppose the dedication to have occurred prior to her marriage.(1)

The Lady Catherine Cochrane was the youngest sister of the three, and seems to have been not less richly endowed than her eldest sister with personal and mental graces. "But who is she?" exclaims Hamilton of Bangour:—

"But who is she, the general gaze
Of sighing crowds, the world's amaze,
Who looks forth as the blushing morn
On mountains of the east, new born?
Is it not Cochrane fair? 'Tis she
The youngest grace of graces three.
The eldest fell to death a prey,
Ah! snatch'd in early flower away;

(1) The following stanza appears in the epistle of Hamilton of Gilbertfield to our poet, (vol. III. p. 42,) *dated 26th August*, 1719:—

"The Powers aboon be still auspicious
To thy achievements maist delicious;
Thy poems sweet, and nae way vicious,
But blythe and canny,
To see I'm anxious and ambitious,
Thy Miscellany."

It thus appears that upwards of four years before the date generally assumed for the appearance of the Miscellany, and three before the letter of Mallet lately referred to, the 'Tea Table Miscellany' was not only projected, but announced and anxiously expected by the friends of Ramsay. In his epistle to Stirrat, which from its position in his quarto 1728 may have been written in 1721, certainly not later than 1722, he says,

"Excuse me till anither day,
When I've mair time; *for shortly I'm to sing*
Some dainty sangs that sall round Crochan ring:"

and the next piece following that epistle, in that collection, is 'Bonny Christie,' which is the opening song of the 'Tea Table Miscellany.'

The second, manifold of charms,
Blesses a happy husband's arms;(1)
The third a blameless form remains,
O'er all the blooming victor reigns;
Where'er she gracious deigns to move,
The public praise—the public love."

This lady became, at a later period, a favourite with our poet. She is the second of the ladies named in the following lines on the Royal Archers, vol. I. p. 222, as toasted at their meeting:

"Katies four of beauteous name,
Stewart and Cochrane Lady claim,
Third Hamilton, fourth Ardress name."

The first of these was daughter to the Earl of Galloway, and sister to Lord Garlies. To the third the song entitled 'Virtue and Wit; the preservative of Love and Beauty,' appears to be inscribed in his quarto of 1728.(2) The fourth was probably Lady Catherine Hall, daughter of Sir James Hall of Dunglass, afterwards married to Hamilton of Bangour. Lady Cochrane is the subject of his 'Ballad on Bonny Kate,' vol. II. p. 211,

"Cease, poets, your cunning devising
Of rhymes that low beauties o'errate;
They all, like the stars at the rising
Of Phœbus, must yield to fair Kate;"

which does not appear, however, to have been published by him as a song, as it is not to be found in the 'Mis-

(1) The second sister, Lady Susan, Countess of Strathmore. "It would have been well for her," says the Editor of Hamilton of Bangour's Poems, "if she had shared her elder sister's fate."

(2) To Mrs. K. H., to the tune of 'Killicrankie.'—In the Index to this quarto she is styled C. of D., Countess of Dundonald, and therefore became stepmother to Lady Catherine Cochrane, the second of these.

cellany.'(1) She was wooed by his friend Alexander Lord Garlies, sixth Earl of Galloway, then a widower, and the happy subject of the piece entitled 'A Character,' vol. III. p. 16, as may be judged by the rhyme and the note.

"Ye'll own he's a deserving man
That in these outlines stands before ye;
And trowth the picture I have drawn
Is very like my friend ——— (2)
(Lord Garlie).

and the song, vol. II. p. 288, is expressly stated to be composed on the occasion of their marriage.(3) The piece in the 'Miscellany' entitled 'The Complaint,' (vol. II. p. 279,) inscribed to B(rigantius) J(ovis) G(arlies,) is pro-

(1) It was evidently, like numerous other pieces of his, never intended, when first composed, to meet the public eye. Hence the lines—

"'This name,' say ye, 'many a lass has,
And t' apply it may raise a debate;'
But sure he as dull as an ass is,
That cannot join Cochrane to Kate."

See vol. I. p. 88. The Dr. J. C., through whom these lines were sent to the lady, is Dr. John Clerk, before referred to, a physician of some reputation in Edinburgh, and member of the 'Worthy club.' It was published in his quarto of 1728.

(2) The character, though true, has something in it so great that my too modest friend will not allow me to set his name to it.—*Note by Ramsay.*

(3) It took place in 1729. The Countess of Galloway had a numerous issue. She died at Bath 15th March, 1786. Her beautiful complexion as Lady Garlies, is made the subject of an epithet in the chorus verse of a song by Hamilton of Bangour, entitled 'The Flower of Yarrow,' addressed to Lady Mary Montgomery:—

"Go, lovely Rose, what dost thou here,
Ling'ring away thy short-liv'd year?
Vainly shining, idly blooming,
Thy unenjoyed sweets consuming;

"Vain is thy radiant Garlies' hue,
No hand to pull, no eye to view;
What are thy charms, no heart desiring?
What profits beauty, none admiring?"

bably in reference to their loves.(1) Young Brigantius and young Garlies are appellations given to his lordship in the Ode on the occasion of the loss of his first wife, as well as in the song above referred to.

That amiable individual was Lady Anne Keith, second daughter of William, third Earl Marischal of Scotland, sister of the celebrated Marshal Keith, and nearly related to Lady Clerk, wife of Sir John Clerk of Pennycuick, Bart., the intimate associate of our poet. She is described by Wood the continuator of Douglas's peerage as a lady "justly esteemed for her wit and beauty and all the qualities worthy of her noble birth;" and has an 'Ode' dedicated or sacred to her memory, vol. I. p. 259, from his pen. Lady Anne appears to have died about 1722, not 1728 as stated in this collection. The song of 'Through the wood laddie,' vol. II. p. 253, is in Johnson's 'Musical Museum,' said, in a note by C. K. Sharp, Esq., on the authority of tradition, to have reference to

(1) This song, which describes the anxieties of a modest and doubtful affection in language which Ramsay never perhaps surpassed in pathos—

"A while my mind delighted flies
O'er all her sweets with thrilling joy,
Whilst want of worth makes doubts arise
That all my trembling hopes destroy,"—

is a substitution for an English one by Thomas Southerne, introduced into the comedy called 'The Disappointment, or Mother of Fashion,' acted in London in 1684, and printed in Henry Playford's 'Theater of Music,' book i. p. 5, London 1685, and of which there is a copy in the 'Musical Museum,' vol. I. p 56. It was composed to the tune of an old English air by Farmer in treble time, which is that referred to by Ramsay in the Miscellany as 'When absent from the nymph I love,' to which his words were directed to be sung. William Thomson, however, adapted it to an old Scotch tune, in common time, called 'O Jeanie, I love thee,' a delightful and greatly superior air, in his 'Orpheus Caledonius,' 1725. The song has been often reprinted in collections. From its position in the Miscellany, it is probable this song was first published about 1727; but is not included in his quarto of 1728, and probably for the same reason as that addressed to Lady Mary Montgomery, viz. that the parties did not desire to be recognised in the select circle to which that volume was exclusively confined.

an *amour* of the Hon. Alexander Murray,—not the gentleman of that name, whose marriage with Lady Euphemia Stewart, sister of Lord Garlies, is celebrated by Ramsay, vol. I. p. 237;"—but a younger son of Alexander, fourth Lord Elibank, distinguished by his jacobinical opinions. From the following allusion, it is much more likely that this song had reference to a married pair—

> "But quick as an arrow
> Haste here to thy *marrow*"(1)—

and certainly not to an illicit or concealed affection.

> "That I am forsaken some spare na to tell;
> I'm fash'd wi' their scorning
> Baith evening and morning,
> Their jeering gaes aft to my heart wi' a knell,
> When through the wood, laddie, I wander mysel'."

As the gentleman here referred to was not born till some years after his elder brother Patrick, fifth Lord Elibank, in 1703—he could not have been more than fourteen or fifteen years of age when this song was composed, about 1720. From its coincidence with the Christian names of the parties,

> "O Sandy, why leaves thou thy Nelly to mourn?"

and internal evidence, therefore, it is more probable that it has reference to the married loves of Lord Garlies and Lady Ann Keith, whose relationship to Sir John Clerk may have led the lady to visit his hospitable mansion, and to have amused herself, during the absence of her husband, by wandering in the woods around it, in which they were accustomed to walk. Her elder sister, Mary,

(1) *Marrow*, in reference to man or woman, in Scotch, is almost, if not always understood of husband or wife.

Countess of Wigton, who died about 1720, is the subject of one of Ramsay's earliest pastorals, and one not inferior in simplicity and feeling to any he ever wrote.

It is interesting to contrast, in these compositions, the easy familiarity of Ramsay's praise, with the more respectful admiration of the younger poet.

Ramsay has been blamed for the complimentary and deferential language he uses to persons of rank. It would be more correct to say that no poet of that age was more free from this charge. To the instances already adduced we may add his familiarity in all his dedications. To his chief, the Earl of Dalhousie, he thus addresses himself, vol. III. p. 55:

"Dalhousie of an auld descent."

To Lord Binning, in one of his translations of Horace, initialled R. H. B.—(Right Honourable Binning, pronounced Binny, and frequently so written)—leaving out his title of Lord perhaps the better to maintain the incognito, and at the same time convey a compliment:—vol. III. p. 62:

"O B(inny), cou'd these fields of thine
Bear, as in Gaul, the juicy vine."

And he is complimented by Hamilton of Bangour for his sincerity in the following terms: (1)

"Dear Ramsay, if I know thy soul aright,
Plain-dealing honesty's thy dear delight:
Not great, but candid born; not rich, but free;
Thinks kings most wretched, and most happy me:
Thy tongue untaught to lie, thy knee to bend,
I fear no flatt'rer where I wish a friend." (2)

(1) In his imitation of Horace, Book i. Epistle xviii.

(2) The Editor of Hamilton of Bangour's poems (1850) seems, by a remark in another place, to doubt if this dedication refer to our poet. But it is expressly applied to him by Campbell, in his introduction to the History of Poetry in Scotland. Indeed, as the reason assigned by Mr.

Even with respect to the ladies, Ramsay is free from the imputation of extravagant praise. "His dedication of the 'Gentle Shepherd,'" says Mr. R. Chambers in his account of the Countess of Eglinton, "which *appears* to contain the usual amount of extravagant praise, was perhaps little beyond the truth, and he assuredly overstrained his conscience very little when he said of this lady that she was 'possessed of every outward charm in the most extraordinary degree.' Neither was it," says he, "too much to speak of the unfading beauties of piety and wisdom which adorned her ladyship's mind." Hamilton of Bangour's prefatory verses to her ladyship are equally laudatory, and well bestowed. And of the minor beauties celebrated by him, the truth of his praise, already exhibited by the quotations from contemporary writers in the cases already given, receives further confirmation, in the case of Miss Mary Sleigh, afterwards Lady Brodie of Brodie, referred to in vol. I. p. 203, and vol. III. p. 245, from a contemporary manuscript ballad copied by Mr. R. Chambers. "The name is given by mistake," he says, "however, as Lee, not Sleigh, it being a revivification of an old broad sheet." The following is a quotation from that document:

Paterson (for cherishing this doubt) is, that probably Hamilton moved n a circle above that of the humble devotee of letters, a fact we dispute, we may set that aside. As well at the time Bangour wrote this imitation, as at that of his writing the imitation of the Ode xxi. Book iii., quoted below, Hamilton of Bangour was a younger brother without estate or office, and hanging about town with the young men of the day. Ramsay was then in the zenith of his fame, and the companion and friend of the highest as well as the most accomplished in the land. The reference in the latter Ode is as follows:

"TO A CASK OF TWENTY-YEAR-OLD BEER.

"O born with me, when Anna reign'd,
And prudent Warrender sustain'd,
The rights of Edin town;
Come now, good fellow, and descend,
Decreed to entertain a friend,
'Tis Ramsay calls thee down."

"Frae Seton's land a countess fair looked o'er a window hie,
And pined to see the genty shape of bonnie Mally Lee.
And we're a' gaun east and west, we're a' gaun ajee,
We're a' gaun east and west, a-courtin' Mally Lee.

And when she reached the palace porch, there lounged Earls three,
And ilk ane thought his Kate and Meg a drab to Mally Lee.
And we're a' gaun, &c.

The dance gaed through the palace ha', a comely sight to see;
But nane was there so bright or braw as bonnie Mally Lee.
And we're a' gaun, &c.

Though some had jewels in their hair, like stars 'mang cluds did shine,
Yet Mally did surpass them a' wi' her but glancing eyne.
And we're a' gaun east and west, we're a' gaun ajee,
We're a' gaun east and west, a-courtin' Mally Lee."

The 'Tea Table Miscellany,' as a treasury where is stored up the impressions of society as respects the most distinguished of its members, many of which impressions the world would not "willingly let die," derives additional importance from the circumstance that it presents a state of society now nearly extinct, and not likely to be revived. The simple singing of Scotch songs, without any accompaniment whatever, was one of the amusements resorted to by the best society in Edinburgh, at those assemblages then so fashionable, called evening parties. Cards and gambling, we are told, could not keep their ground against this fascination, in which the first ladies and gentlemen of the land took their share. When the lovely Lady Mary Lilias Scott, the younger 'Flower of Yarrow,' the heroine of Crawford's 'Tweedside,' sang, alone or with her elder sister, both excellent

singers, Ramsay's ballad of 'Lochaber,'(1) "she did it," says Stenhouse, "with such feeling and effect as to draw tears from those who heard her." And when Lady Murray of Stanhope, to whom Ramsay dedicated the second part of his 'Scots' Music,' daughter of Lady Grizel Baillie, whose tea-parties, given in a flat in the Parliament-square, and esteemed the most delightful affairs that could be, used to sing Lord Yester's set of 'Tweedside,' "she did it," says Mr. R. Chambers, "with such thrilling pathos, that at each cadence at the end of the verses, where the despairing swain laments the necessity of 'laying his banes far from the Tweed,' there was generally a sob of tenderness heard from the company, and they never failed to be found in tears at the conclusion. The accomplished Countess of Eglinton is recorded to have sung Mallet's ballad, 'A youth adorned with every art,' composed on the loves of Lady Jean Home and Lord Robert Kerr when at an advanced age, and throughout the central portion of the last century, Scottish song formed a great portion of the entertainment of the better

(1) "From the import of this song," says Stenhouse, "it would seem that Ramsay had composed it in compliment to some young military friend, probably a native of Lochaber, then about to leave his country and his Jean to join the army on the continent." We may perhaps be allowed to conjecture that the hero of it was Captain Stewart, afterwards Sir John Stewart of Grandtully in Perthshire, near to Lochaber, and to whom its braes must have been endeared by youthful associations,—who affianced to Lady Jane Douglas, but inferior to her in rank and wealth, served in the army, because he says,

> "Without it, I ne'er can have merit for thee;
> And without thy favour I'd better not be.
> I'll gae then, my lass, to win honour and fame,
> And if I should luck to come gloriously hame,
> I'll bring a heart to thee with love running o'er,
> And then I'll leave thee and Lochaber no more."

And in reward of his devotion and constancy—if our surmise be correct—the lady refused every other alliance, and remained single until after she had reached the age of 50, when they were married, and became the subjects of a history as interesting as is to be found in the annals of that epoch. See note p. 397.

orders of people in Scotland. Sir Gilbert Elliott, Dr. Austin, Sir John Clerk of Pennicuick, Dr. Webster, Miss Jane Elliot, and Mrs. Cockburn—all of whom moved in the very best circle of society in Edinburgh—were active writers of verses to Scotch tunes. The public, it is true, is only acquainted with one song by each of these individuals, but some of them in reality wrote many such things."(1) How far Ramsay mingled in such society, or had leisure for it, we cannot ascertain; but the allusions in his songs to the charms of the singing of his heroines, are so frequent and so special, that it cannot be doubted he spoke from personally hearing them. In inscribing, on the occasion of their insertion in his quarto of 1721, the Scots songs probably then there published for the first time, to Mrs. Nisbet of Dirleton, he expresses his hope she may sing them.(2) In his 'Bonny Christie,' the first song in the 'Miscellany,' of which we believe she was the heroine,—as the lady referred to in the note vol. II. p. 248, was of the older version of that piece,—he makes the singing of the lady one of her chief attractions.(3)

"That this was indeed," says Robert Chambers, speaking of the epoch of the 'Miscellany,' "the golden age of Scottish music and song, is abundantly clear. How else should Ramsay's volume have been intended, as he himself says, to 'steal itself into the ladies' bosoms?' How else should he have said of his book,

(2) Chambers' 'Introduction to Scottish Song,' in which he gives proof of this.

(2) This inscription, consisting of a few lines, will be found at p. 18 of this volume, where unfortunately their connection with the songs referred to is not only not noticed, but their position makes it impossible to guess at the occasion of their composition. Nisbet of Dirleton appears in the histories of that period as a Jacobite of considerable influence.

(3) Compare lines p. 18 with second stanza of 'Bonny Christy,' vol. II. p. 248. Mrs. Nisbet's first name was Christian.

'The wanton wee thing will rejoice,
When tented by a sparkling e'e,
The spinnet tinkling to her voice,
It lying on her lovely knee:'

these 'wee things' being Ladies Charlotte Anne and Jean, the flower of the nobility of Scotland? And that most of the songs, thus sung and thus composed by Ramsay, were in reference to this nest of noble beauties and their companions, is evident from Mallet's letter at the time of their appearance. 'Ramsay has wonderfully obliged the young creatures, by making public those pretty love songs, where their sparkling eyes, rosy cheeks, and snowy breasts are so tenderly described.'"

VIII.—ADDITIONAL PIECES.

I.

CONTENTS OF THE 'EVERGREEN.'(1)

"As Mr. Dunbar," says Mr. David Laing in his account of the contents of George Bannatyne's manuscripts, in the memorials of that collector published by the Bannatyne club, "as Mr. Dunbar, and several other of our old poets, are under great obligations to Allan Ramsay, who was the first to recommend them to public notice, we shall here insert some lines by him, which are not included in any edition of his works. They were intended to have been prefixed to the 'Evergreen,' and are worthy of preservation, not so much in regard to any merit which they possess, but as expressing his sentiments respecting the merits of some of our early Makers:"—

(1) See p. 360.

SOME FEW OF THE CONTENTS.(1)

Heir mighty James the First, the best of kings,
Imploys the merry muse, and smyling sings.
Grave Balantyne, in verse divinely wyse,
Makis Vertew triumph owre fals fleechand Vyse.

And heir Dunbar does with unbound ingyne,
In satyre, joke, and in the serious schyne.
He to best poets skairslie zields in ocht;
In language he may fail, but not in thocht.

Blyth Kennedie, contesting for the bays,
Attackis his freind Dunbar in comick layis,
And seims the fittest hand (of ony then)
Against sae fell a fae to draw his pen.

Heir Lethington the statisman courts the Nine,
Draps politicks a quhyle, and turns divyne;
Sings the Creation, and fair Eden tint,
And promise made to man, man durst not hint.

To rouse couragious fyre behald the field,
Quhair Hardyknute, with lanss, bow, sword and scheild,
With his braif sonis, dantit the king of Norss,
And cleithed the plain with mony a saules cors.
At Harlaw and Redsquire, the sons may leir,
How thair forbeirs were unacquaint with feir.

Quhen frae the dumps ze wald zour mind discharge,
Then tak the air in smiling Semplis berge:
Or heir him jyb the carlis did Grissy blame,
Quhen eild and spyte takis place of zouthheids flame.

(1) From a copy printed as a broadside, in double columns, without date.

Licht skirtit lasses, and the girnand wyfe,
Fleming and Scot haif painted to the lyfe.
Scot, sweit tungd Scot, quha sings the welcum hame
To Mary, our maist bony soverane dame;
How lyflie he and amorous Stuart sing!
Quhen lufe and bewtie bid them spred the wing.

To mend zour morals, with delyt attend,
Quhyle Henryson dois guidness recommend;
Quhyle truth throw his transport fablis schynes,
And all the mynd to what is just inclynes.

Amangst these starnis of ane immortal bleis,
Montgomery's quatorsimes sall evir pleis;
His eisy sangs, his Cherry and the Slae,
Sall be esteimd quhyle sichs saft lufe betray.

Lindsay the lyon, hardly here is sene,
But in the third apartment of the Grene, (1)
He sall appeir as on the verdant stage;
He towind the vyces of a corrupt aige.

Thair warkis I've publisht, neat, correct, and fair,
Frae antique manuscriptis, with utmost cair.
Thus to their fame, a monument we raise,
Quhilk sall endure quhyle tymis telld out be days.

(1) Ramsay announced his intention to publish a third and fourth volume of the 'Evergreen.'

II.

AN EPISTLE TO JAMES OSWALD, ON HIS LEAVING EDINBURGH.(1)

Dear Oswald, could my verse as sweetly flow
As notes thou softly touchest with the bow,
While all the circling fair attentive hing
On ilk vibration of thy trembling string,
I'd sing how thou wouldst melt our souls away
By solemn notes, or cheer us wi' the gay,
In verse as lasting as thy tunes shall be,
As soft as thy new polish'd 'Danton me.'
But wha can sing that feels wi' sae great pain
The loss for which Edina sighs in vain?
Our concert now nae mair the ladies mind;
They've a' forgot the gait to Niddery's wynd.(2)
Nae mair the 'Braes of Ballandine' can charm,
Nae mair can 'Fortha's Bank' our bosoms warm,
Nae mair the 'Northern Lass' attention draw,
Nor 'Pinky-house' gi' place to 'Alloa.'

(1) From the Scots' Magazine for Oct. 1741. This epistle, says Mr. David Laing in his illustrative notes to Stenhouse's edition of Johnson's 'Musical Museum,' has no author's name, but it might be ascribed to Allan Ramsay. See p. 389.

(2) The music club, established about the year 1721—of which, if this epistle be correctly attributed to him, Ramsay was an original member, and to which the address vol. III. p. 49 is inscribed—held their periodical concerts in Niddry's wynd. The expense was defrayed by annual subscriptions. No money was taken for admission, tickets being given to the members exclusively. In the early part of the century, and before the erection of St. Cecilia's hall (in 1762), when the accommodation was more limited, it is said that on occasions when celebrated pieces were to be performed, so high a sum as fifty pounds has been offered for a single ticket. So respectable was the institution, that, even after the erection of the hall, upon the death of a member, there were generally several applications for the vacancy. An interesting account of the performances at a later period, will be found in Chambers' 'Traditions of Edinburgh,' from the pen of the amiable and venerable George Thomson, Esq., the correspondent and friend of Burns.

O Jamie! when may we expect again
To hear from thee, the soft, the melting strain,
And, what's the loveliest, think it hard to guess,
'Miss S—t' or thy 'Lass of Inverness?'
When shall we sigh at thy soft 'Cypress-grove,'
So well adapted to the tale of love?
When wilt thou teach our soft Æidian fair
To languish at a false Sicilian air;
Or when some tender tune compose again,
And cheat the town wi' David Rizo's name?
Alas! no more shall thy gay tunes delight,
No more thy notes sadness or joy excite,—
No more thy solemn bass's awful sound,
Shall from the chapel's vaulted roof rebound.
London, alas! which aye has been our bane,
To which our very loss is certain gain,
Where our daft lords and lairds spend a' their rents,
In following ilka fashion she invents,
Which laws we like not aft on us entails,
And where we're forc'd to bring our last appeals.
Still envious of the little we had left,
Of Jamie Oswald last our town bereft.
'Tis hard indeed—but may you now repent
The day that to that spacious town you went.
If they thy value know as well as we,
Perhaps our vanish'd gold may flow to thee.
If so, be wise; and when ye're well to fend,
Return again and here your siller spend.
Mean-while, to keep our heavy hearts aboon,
O publish a' your works, and send them soon.
We'll a' subscribe, as we did for the past,
And play while bows may wag or strings can last.
Farewell—perhaps, if you oblige us soon,
I'll sing again to a new fav'rite tune.

III.

THE WYFE OF AUCHTERMUCHTY.(1)

In Auchtermuchty dwelt a man,
An husband, as I heard it tawld,
Quha weil coud tipple out a can,
And nowther luvit hungir nor cauld,
Till anes it fell upon a day,
He yokit his plewch upon the plain;
(But schort the storm wald let him stay,
Sair blew the day with wind and rain.)

He lowsd the plewch at the lands end,
And draife his owsen hame at ene;
Quhen he came in he blinkit ben,
And saw his wyfe baith dry and clene,
(Set beikand by a fyre full bauld,
Suppand fat sowp, as I heard say:)
The man being weary, wet and cauld,
Betwein thir twa it was nae play.

(1) From the 'Evergreen,' vol. I. p. 137, after the Bannatyne MS. Lord Hailes edited it *literatim* from the same MS. in 1770. In Blackwood's Magazine, April 1817, a third edition, and perhaps the best, taken from the same MS., but collated with another, and apparently older copy in the Advocates' library, is to be found. It is a singular fact, that of the alterations this last contains from the transcript of Lord Hailes, not a few, here marked in italics, had been anticipated by Ramsay in his version in the 'Evergreen.' The edition of Blackwood contains an entire stanza supplied from the older copy, and it is singular that Ramsay had supplied a stanza on the same topic. If the reader will compare the three editions, viz. that of Ramsay, of Lord Hailes, and in Blackwood, he cannot fail to be satisfied of the sagacity and painstaking of Ramsay as an editor. He did not, it is true, copy every variation in spelling, (as wif, wyf, and wyfe; gaislingis, gaisling, gaizlines, gaislis; caves, calfes, calvis, kaves, in almost as many uses of these words,) but selected the most frequently used in each case; and in his revisings he seems to have laid his finger upon passages corrupted by the carelessness of transcribers, and in not a few instances to have restored, as if by divination, the original words. This is no small honour. The passages within brackets are additions or emendations by Ramsay, "which," says Lord Hailes, "are quite in the spirit of the original."

Quod he, quhair is my horses corn,
My owsen has nae hay nor strae,
Dame, ye maun to the plewch the morn,
I sall be hussy gif I may.
(This seid-time it proves cauld and bad,
And ye sit warm, nae troubles se;
The morn ye sall gae with the lad,
And syne yeil ken what drinkers drie.)

Gudeman, quod scho, content am I,
To tak the plewch my day about,
Sae ye rule weil the kaves and ky,
And all the house baith in and out:
(And now sen ye haif made the law,
Then gyde all richt and do not break;
They sicker raid that neir did faw,
Therefore let naithing be neglect.)

But sen ye will hussyskep ken,
First ye maun sift and syne sall kned;
And ay as ye gang butt and ben,
Luke that the bairns dryt not the bed:
And lay a saft wysp to the kiln,
We haif a dear farm on our heid;
And ay as ye gang forth and in,
Keip weil the gaislings frae the gled.

The wyfe was up richt late at ene,
I pray luck gife her ill to fair,
Scho kirn'd the kirn, and skumt it clene,
Left the gudeman but bledoch bair:
Then in the morning up scho gat;
And on hir heart laid hir disjune,
And pat as mekle in her lap,
As micht haif serd them baith at nune.

Says, Jok, be thou maister of wark,
And thou sall had, and I sal ka,
Ise promise thee a gude new sark,
Either of round claith or of sma.
Scho lowst the ousen aught or nyne,
And hynt a gad-staff in her hand:
Up the gudeman raise aftir syne,
And saw the wyfe had done command.

He draif the gaislings forth to feid,
Thair was but sevensum of them aw,
And by thair comes the greidy gled,
And lickt up five, left him but twa:
Then out he ran in all his mane,
How sune he heard the gaislings cry;
But than or he came in again,
The kaves brak louse and suckt the ky.

The kaves and ky met in the loan,
The man ran with a rung to red,
Than by came an illwilly roan,
And brodit his buttoks till they bled:
Syne up he tuke a rok of tow,
And he sat down to sey the spinning;
He loutit doun our neir the low,
Quod he this wark has ill beginning.

(The leam up throu the lum did flow,
The sute tuke fyre it flyed him than,
Sum lumps did fall and burn his pow;
I wat he was a dirty man:
Yit he gat water in a pan,
Quherwith he slokend out the fyre:
To soup the house he syne began,
To had all richt was his desyre.)

Hynd to the kirn then did he stoure,
And jumblit at it till he swat,
Quhen he had *rumblit* a full lang hour,
The sorrow crap of butter he gat;
Albeit nae butter he could get,
Yit he was cummert with the kirn,
And syne he het the milk sae het,
That ill a spark of it wad yirn.

Then ben thair cam a greidy sow,
I trow he cund hir litle thank:
For in scho shot hir mekle mow,
And ay scho winkit, and aye scho drank.
(He tuke the kirnstaff be the schank,)
And thocht to reik the sow a rout,
(The twa left gaislings gat a clank,)
That straik dang baith thair harns out.

Then he bure kendling to the kill,
But scho start all up in a low,
Quhat eir he heard, what eir he saw,
That day he had nae will to wow.
Then he gied to take up the bairns,
Thocht to have fund them fair and clene;
The first that he gat in his arms,
Was a' bedirtin to the ene.

(The first it smellt sae sappylie,
To touch the lave he did not grein:)
The deil cut aff their hands, quoth he,
That cramd your kytes sae strute yestrein.
He traild the foul sheits down the gate,
Thocht to haif wush them on a stane,
The burn was risen grit of spait,
Away frae him the sheits has tane.

Then up he gat on a know heid,
  On hir to cry, on hir to schout:
Scho hard him, and scho hard him not,
  But stoutly steird the stots about.
Scho draif the day unto the nicht,
  Scho lowst the plewch, and syne came hame;
Schò fand all wrang that sould been richt,
  I trow the man thocht mekle schame.

Quoth he, my office I forsake,
  For all the hale days of my lyfe;
For I wald put a house to wraik,
  Had I been twenty days gudewyfe.
Quoth scho, weil *mot* ye bruke your place,
  For truely I sall neir *accept it;*
Quoth he, feynd fa the lyars face,
  But yit ye may be blyth to get it.

Then up scho gat a mekle rung;
  And the gudeman made to the dore,
Quoth he, dame, I sall hald my tung,
  For and we fecht I'll get the war:
Quoth he, when I forsuke my plewch,
  I trow I but forsuke my skill:
Then I will to my plewch again;
  For I and this house will nevir do weil.

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